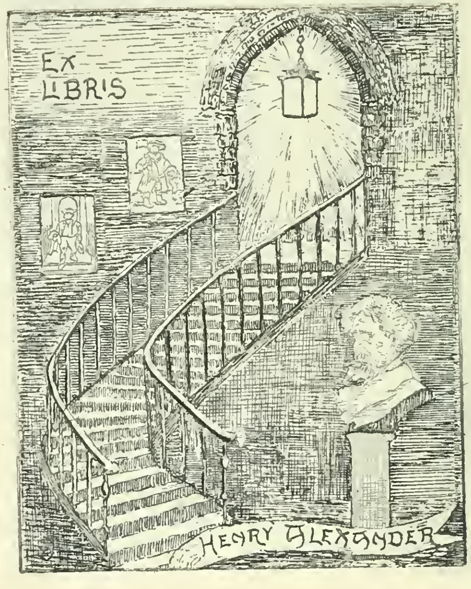
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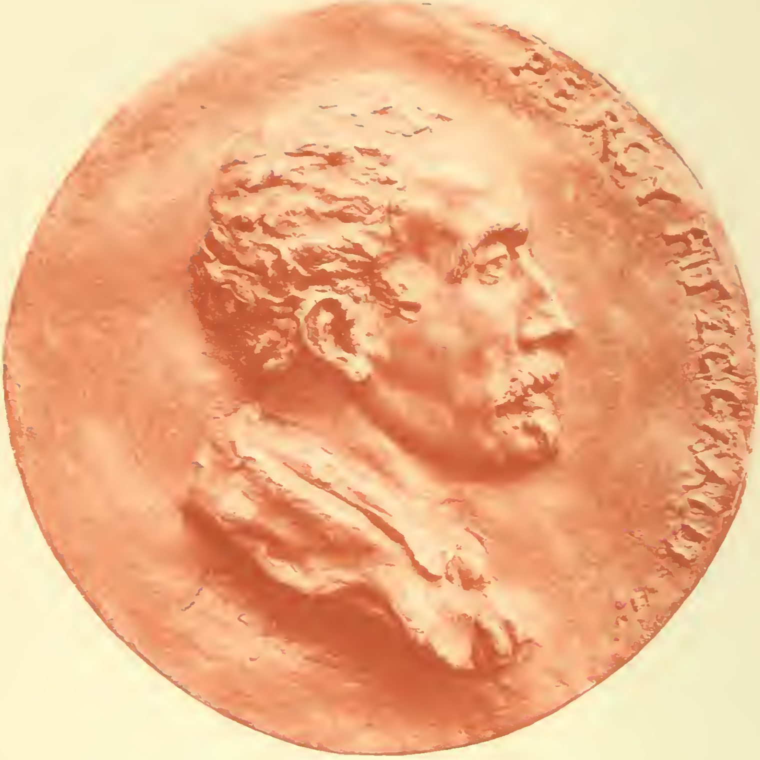
PERCY FITZGERALD

Percy Fitzgerald

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON 1894

MEMOIRS OF AN AUTHOR

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF 'RECREATIONS OF A LITERARY MAN,' 'THE BOOK FANCIER,' 'THE ART OF THE STAGE,' ETC.

'Vita sine literis, mors'

'Your glass may be small, but drink out of your own glass'
DE MUSSET

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen
1895

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TO

SIR RICHARD QUAIN, Bart., M.D., F.R.S.,

AN OLD AND VALUED FRIEND

AND

FRIEND OF MY FRIENDS.

Dawson [illegible] 20 [illegible] 1927 Engl

PREFACE.

'MEMOIRS OF AN AUTHOR' may seem a somewhat pretentious title; and the carper or cynic may hold that no one may properly dub himself author, any more than he can dub himself knight. It will be seen, however, that I have used the convenient term 'writing man' through the book, though a glance at the list of some two hundred volumes, given at the end of the work—not in ostentation, but simply as a sort of 'curio'—might justify some claim to authorship. But quantity, alas! is not exactly the same thing as quality.

This book, I think, will be found to differ from others of the same pattern, which usually supply anecdotes, recollections, 'good stories,' etc., of well-known personages. I have always thought that 'impressions,' as they may be called—that is, the general idea of a person or situation which has been left on our minds—are more effective than mere description of incidents and details. Thus, in giving my own 'impressions' of what has passed before me, I fancy I am showing how others might have been affected at the time, and am likely also to touch the sympathies of the reader. The truth is, no description, however minute, no 'auctioneer's catalogue' of details, will have the dramatic effect of the few vivid touches that suggest our own personal feelings at the moment, and come, as Sterne said, 'warm from the heart.' I have also striven to turn such practice as I have had in the novelist's art—and the writing of some thirty novels ought to furnish practice at least—to good purpose, by presenting 'characters' to the reader, and touches of character, rather than anecdotes.

A further object which I have had in view is to show that there are passing before everyone innumerable little scenes, exhibitions of character, and dramatic incidents, which wholly escape the incurious and unobserving. A habit of observation will secure us abundant entertainment. And if there be any doubts as to the value of my own personal 'impressions' of men and things, I must only comfort myself with Horace Walpole's saying, that if anyone were to set down naturally, and without affectation, all that he had seen, heard, and felt, the result would be an entertaining book—'in whatever hands,' he adds.

Not without interest, too—as I fancy—will be read the account given here of an unpretending, hard-working 'writing man's' life, which will be found of an altogether different complexion from what is popularly associated with the craft. Here he is shown ever observing, ever taking stock of what is about him, finding significance and entertainment in what seems a blank to others, and turning everything into something dramatic. All things strike him in *some* sort of fashion; and his mind is being perpetually furnished and refurnished.

I do not think any such sketch has hitherto been attempted, with at least the same candour; and I have some faint hopes that from the interest another work of mine, somewhat of the same kind, excited, these confessions will be welcomed with curiosity and favour.

Athenæum Club,
October, 1894.

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BOOK I.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LITERARY WORLD

'On ne vit dans la mémoire du monde que par des travaux pour le monde.'—CHATEAUBRIAND.

MEMOIRS OF AN AUTHOR

CHAPTER I.

DICKENS AND 'HOUSEHOLD WORDS.'

ALMOST facing the Lyceum portico, in Wellington Street, there stood for forty years and more a rather gracious-looking, bow-windowed little structure, prominent yet half retiring, of good architectural proportion in its modest way, and having a cosy, inviting air. Beside it was the stage-entrance of the Gaiety Theatre, with a flaunting canvas transparency overhead, for which its little neighbour became a sort of Naboth's vineyard. Not very long ago scaffoldings were reared about it, and the windows were bricked up. It passed away unnoticed, and was absorbed into its garish neighbour without remark; yet no London 'Old Mortality' could see its condition without a pang;

for it was once the old, original 'Office of *Household Words*,' that favourite 'weekly,' read by all as the inspired utterance of the gifted editor. Nowadays we have no one of this commanding eminence whose thoughts are worthy of such attention. His attraction ennobled the cheap 'weekly,' 'price twopence,' or in the 'monthly parts price ninepence'; and at the railway-bookstalls the traveller laid out his twopence without loss of self-respect. Everything he said was eagerly waited for and devoured. Who is there now living for whose opinions we would give twopence weekly?

The little office has associations yet more interesting, from its connection with the cheeriest and most buoyant portion of Dickens's life. From March 30, 1850, the day he founded his journal, to 1859, when he extinguished it, the place became the scene of a very joyous, inspiring portion of his life. Never was he so gaily exuberant, so full of vivacity, or so fertile in schemes. Here he planned, wrote, and saw his friends and contributors; and here, too, he had many a little supper after the play. Nothing could be more cheerful than the snug, well-furnished little front room, the bow-window whereof almost commanded a view of the Strand ; at times the hum of Covent Garden reached it. Another great writer, 'Elia,' lived but a few doors away round the corner, and revelled in the din of the market. It is not unlikely that the little building had been remodelled for 'Boz' by some architect friend, such as Hardwicke or Darbyshire ; for it offered a contrast to the rough-and-ready style of the conventional newspaper or magazine office. On the bow-window of the little office many a neophyte's eyes have settled wistfully and reverentially, knowing that within, at that moment, the great man was busy, it might be, 'making up' the next number. After some patient waiting, he might be seen to emerge, making for the South-Eastern station by Maiden Lane and such back streets, trudging along with animation and eagerness. More exciting, however, was it when the neophyte had the rare privilege of an appointment. What a flutter of nervousness as he paced up and down before he could steady himself sufficiently to enter! And how genial and reassuring was his reception! Often would Dickens be found by some acquaintance lunching. 'Sit down,' he would say, 'and have some of this capital *foie-gras*'—a favourite delicacy of his. You did not interrupt him by thus intruding, for he was really glad to see you. No one was more hearty in pressing you to a 'little supper' after the play. Many such nights associated with the little room can we recall. Better than the fare was the hearty zest with which he anticipated the little revel and contrived the excuse.*

On his victory over the recalcitrant publishers and the suppression of *Household Words*, the triumphant author removed his new journal to larger quarters, No. 26, higher up at the corner, where it remained until a year or so ago. But, somehow, it never seemed the same thing. The cosy charm of the bow-window, the smiling air of invitation, had gone. Another journal came to the old office and took its place, and in its turn has now been removed. But, whether office or theatrical dressing-room, the ghostly memories of Charles Dickens and his school must always cling to it.

---

* As when we went to see at Drury Lane that old fossil of the 'palmy-day drama,' 'The Miller and his Men,' with him always a favourite subject for jest. He would repeat the opening sentence with a due sense of its grotesqueness: '*More* grist to the mill!' He anticipated a rich crop of absurdity from the performance, and the very unconsciousness of the absurdity was to be the charm. But the too literal actors were as foreign to the piece as he was himself: they knew not what to do with it, and felt they were groping in a strange land. The result was, therefore, failure; and after an act or so he withdrew, rueful and disappointed. The old play was vindicated.

This little office I have thus dwelt on because it had a significance which it is difficult to understand now. It was then the grand centre of periodical work; indeed, it might be said, of all literary work. The eyes of everyone interested in writing were turned eagerly to the modest house in Wellington Street, where ruled and reigned the supreme writer of the day. In our time, when there are innumerable writers, almost of equal rank, but not of such conspicuous merit, it is difficult to conceive of a state of things where a single writer, supreme above his fellows, gave the law in everything that was concerned with writing.

Socially, too, he had an extraordinary position, of which we can form a fair idea by considering what is thought of Mr. Gladstone in comparison with other politicians. And he made his influence felt, not in his great works merely, but in all those smaller efforts which kept him constantly 'in touch' with his public, and where he showed a versatility and brilliancy which delighted even the most superficial. One result of this exceptional position was that he formed the virtual centre of literary work, and that there was clustered round him a large group of writers, successful, or soon to be successful, whose efforts he moulded and directed.

Of these, about half a dozen were his own intimates, who were thoroughly familiar with and understood what was in his mind, among them being Wilkie Collins, Edmund Yates, W. H. Wills, Sir E. Lytton Bulwer, and a few more. With the rest he was friendly rather than a friend. In a little work published some years ago,* I have related very fully my own personal relations with him. I may repeat, however, that it was delightful to have any transaction with him, as it left the most agreeable, satisfying impression.

I always think with pleasure that—if it be not presumptuous to say so—I was a sort of favourite of his, and that, from the pains he took in amending and correcting all I wrote, I may be almost entitled to consider myself his pupil. More than one scene connected with his sad closing days comes back to me now.

Old bills—play-bills, concert-bills, and programmes generally—are, according to Elia, potent evolvers of the past. As we look at the unfaded characters on the tinged paper, ghostly images seem to rise out of them, taking shape like the cloudy figures out of the magician's brazen pot. Before me now are two little bills associated with the last days of Dickens's life : the first, one of a concert given by him after he came to town in 1869, and had taken Mr. Milner Gibson's house, No. 5, Hyde Park Place, opposite the Marble Arch. He wished to amuse his daughters. The night was that of Thursday, April 7, 1870, only some two months before his lamented death. It was a very brilliant reception, all the noise and bustle of such things mingling curiously with the usual clatter of the busy corner outside. I see the brightly-glancing eyes of the genial host as he stood at the door, cordially receiving the stream that poured up the stairs, his brisk, animated figure in constant motion. Some of the leading performers of the day had eagerly offered their services, destined to be a last and graceful tribute to the charm of his talent. Joachim had come, 'king of violinists' ; with Santley, then in his prime, with the eminent tenor of the time, W. H. Cummings, and Hallé — not yet Sir Charles. Here is the programme of the night :

---

* 'Recreations of a Literary Man.' Second edition.

5, Hyde Park Place, W.,
Thursday Evening, April 7, 1870.

MUSIC.

Vocalists: Miss Edith Wynne, Mr. W. H. Cummings, and Mr. Santley.
Violin: Herr Joachim.
Pianoforte: Lady Thomson and Mr. Charles Hallé.
The London Glee and Madrigal Union (*under the direction of M. Lander*): Miss Jane Wells, Mr. Boxler, Mr. Coates, M. Lander, and Mr. Lawler.
Accompanist: Mr. A. H. Thouler.

PROGRAMME.

PART I.

Madrigal - - - 'Now is the Month of May' - *T. Morley*, 1570.
Song - - - 'I Dream of Thee' - - *Smart.*
MR. W. H. CUMMINGS.
Violin Solo - - - *a.* Barcarolle - - *Spohr.*
b. Abendlied - - *Schumann.*
HERR JOACHIM accompanied by LADY THOMSON.
Aria - - 'O Lisbona' (Don Sebastian) - *Donizetti.*
MR. SANTLEY.
Andante and Rondo Capriccioso - Pianoforte - - - *Mendelssohn.*
MR. CHARLES HALLÉ.
Glee - - - 'By Celia's Arbour' - - *W. Horsley, M.B.*
THE LONDON GLEE AND MADRIGAL UNION.
Song - - - 'The mighty trees bend' - *Schubert.*
MISS EDITH WYNNE.
Madrigal - - 'Who shall win my lady fair?' - *Pearsall.*
THE LONDON GLEE AND MADRIGAL UNION.

Ices.

PART II.

Glee - - - 'When winds breathe soft' - *Webbe.*
THE LONDON GLEE AND MADRIGAL UNION.
Duet - - 'How sweet the Moonlight' - *A. S. Sullivan.*
MISS EDITH WYNNE AND MR. W. H. CUMMINGS.
Sonata - - - 'Il trillo del Diavolo' - - *Tartini.*
For Violin with Piano accompaniment.
HERR JOACHIM AND LADY THOMSON.
Ballad - 'The winds that waft my sighs to thee' *W. V. Wallace.*
MR. SANTLEY.
Solos - - - Pianoforte *a.* Nocturne *b.* Valse - *Chopin.*
MR. CHARLES HALLÉ.
Trio - - - 'Te Sol te' (Attila) - - *Verdi.*
MISS EDITH WYNNE, MR. W. H. CUMMINGS, AND MR. SANTLEY.
Catch - 'Would you know my Celia's charms?' *S. Webbe.*
THE LONDON GLEE AND MADRIGAL UNION.

Supper.

The artists, it could be seen, discharged their duty with a kindly ardour and graciousness, as if wishing to set off the entertainment as much as possible for their host's sake. This feeling was notably conspicuous in the case of Joachim, then in great fame, and perhaps more talked about than he is now. The great violinist played his best. It was evident that this *empressement* gave the greatest pleasure to the host, who showed his gratitude by many attentions. At intervals the Glee and Madrigal corps discoursed their rather solemn and classical strains, exciting—as such music usually does in a drawing-room—respect rather than enthusiasm.

All Dickens's friends were there—Wills and his lively wife and others, to say nothing of his own family and its many branches. It was altogether a brilliant and delightful night. But the central figure was that of the engaging host, with his ever-brilliant and remarkable face—now a little strained and worn, yet full of smiles and animation, flitting here, there, and everywhere, and attending to everybody. I see him thus passing a very attractive, demure little lady, recently married, who in her half-shy way stopped him as he flitted by and very prettily said: 'Mr. Dickens, you have passed me constantly during the night and never once spoken to me!' He gave a pleasantly dramatic start of horror. 'Good gracious! No? you don't say so? Have I? Then let us make up for it at once, and go downstairs together to supper!' And away she tripped, giving her husband a glance of pride. At the supper-table he was in great spirits with this little dame, pulling crackers, etc., and uttering his gay and quaint conceits. One of these toys, a green 'surprise' fan of tissue paper, which he drew out of its case with assumed awe, is now before me, it and the bill aforesaid being the sole faded memorials of the night.

That was his last act of hospitality, and in two short months the curtain had been rung down and the lights were out for ever. I like to think of that brilliant picture, which somehow—and not so remotely—recalled the lights and colouring of that party at the school which Paul Dombey witnessed.

Yet one more vision associated with these later days, which floats back to me from another faded bill. Just by the corner of Cromwell Road, South Kensington, and facing the Natural History Museum, there stands a great mansion—one of its sides displaying a row of tall windows. This was the hospitable house of Mr. and Mrs. Freake—later Sir Charles and Lady Freake; and here were given for many years—say from 1865 to 1885—a round of agreeable private theatricals and concerts directed by the hostess with much taste and success. The long row of windows alluded to were those of her spacious theatre, designed specially, with raised seats and a well-appointed stage.

A pleasant history might be written of the Cromwell House performances, in which figured many notable persons. Here used to play Brandram and Lady Monckton, and Sir Charles Young—who so curiously found success as a dramatist after years of struggle, but only on the eve of his death. Here was Palgrave Simpson, the versatile and accomplished Miss Harriet Young, Spalding, Twiss, and many more, who all formed part of the established *corps dramatique*. Here came George Grossmith, Beerbohm Tree, and Arthur Cecil. We had a unique performance of Mr. Burnand's operetta of 'Box and Cox,' Cecil and Grossmith playing, and Sir (then Mr.) Arthur Sullivan directing the music. There was also a good classical performance of 'The Wife's Secret,' handsomely mounted, with new scenery, dresses, and decorations. But few that witnessed it will forget the fine spectacle of 'The Tale of Troy,' with its rare *appareil* of beautiful women—Grecian maids—set off by lovely scenery and fine music, to which all London came to feast its eyes and to admire.

Looking back to the days of June, 1870—a long stretch—I recall one momentous performance that took place in this theatre. The memories of the old amateur plays got up by Dickens were still fresh, notably that of 'The Frozen Deep,' in which his family had taken part. His two interesting daughters, Miss Mamie Dickens and Mrs. Charles Collins, had a pleasing talent in this way, always carefully directed or inspired by their father, and it was known that they were to assist on this special night at Cromwell House.

In these closing days the amiable writer, as is well known, was sadly worn and jaded, the effect, no doubt, of his disastrous American expedition. I recollect calling on him about this time, and being struck by his air of pain and worry, and the 'strained' look on his fine forehead. I ventured to ask him to come to some private theatricals I was planning; he spoke wearily and piteously of the burden of parties and engagements, but good-naturedly said he would try to 'drop in' if he could. I recall his spare, nervous figure, and the small, delicately-shaped hands. He was longing to find himself in the country again at his much-loved Gadshill. Then his airy nature asserted itself, and he began to talk of the stage, particularly of his friend Regnier, the actor, whose acting he praised in 'Les Vieux Garçons,' though, he added, 'He ought to act it well, for he will soon be an old boy himself.'

I recall the beautiful scenery of 'The Prima Donna,' designed by the hostess herself. The French 'bouffonnerie' which closed the night was remarkable for the share taken in it by Mr. Alfred Thompson, who later made a name as a burlesque writer, and was, further, one of the first who scientifically, as it were, designed costumes for the stage.

I think I may have had one glimpse of Dickens that night, but he kept himself secluded and shrouded from observation. After the play was over, as I have been assured by our hostess, he could not for a few moments be found, and was discovered by his son-in-law behind the scenes, seated in a corner in a dreamy state and abstracted. He thought he said, he was at home. He was wearied out: yet insisted on returning that night to Gadshill, and, I believe, did so. That was Thursday, June 2, and on the Wednesday following he was dead.

That night was long remembered. A brilliant company was assembled. Here is the bill:

Cromwell House,
Thursday, June 2, 1870.

A HAPPY PAIR.

Characters.

Mr. Honeyton - - - - Mr. Augustus Spalding.
Mrs. Honeyton - - - - Miss Harriet Young.

THE PRIMA DONNA.

Characters.

Dr. Holbein - - - - - Mr. Hastings Hughes.
Eric - - - - - - Mr. Crawford Grove.
Rouble - - - - - - Mr. Herman Merivale.
Stella - - - - - - Miss Dickens.
Alice - - - - - - Mrs. Charles Collins.

LE MYOSOTIS.

Bouffonnerie.

Corbillon (Empailleur) - - - Mr. Harold Power.
Schweitzberg (Violoncellist) - - Mr. Alfred Thompson.

It will be seen that our old, well-worn friend 'A Happy Pair' opened the night, in which Miss

Young exhibited all her vivacity. Dickens had carefully trained his daughters in their characters, and superintended the rehearsals, and they performed admirably, as was to be expected. But the piece was a somewhat dull one, and I thought something more effective might have been selected.

At the time Dickens actually thought of getting up the old Adelphi drama, 'The Wreck Ashore,' and had a notion of himself taking a part. But it was only a dim notion, too burdensome for execution.

In my diary, under date of June 9, 1870, I find the following:

'This day died dear Charles Dickens. I think at this moment of his genial, cheery manner, so fresh and cordial. The last time I visited him was about four weeks ago, in his office at Wellington Street.'

And about a week later, Tuesday, June 14, 1870:

'Have just come in from Westminster Abbey. It had been a sultry, fiercely glowing day, and I entered below the vast and cool vaulting. There was a great crowd in one of the transepts; four forms, tied together, made a sort of enclosure.

These were covered with black cloth, and, stooping over, I saw the oak coffin below. It was handsome and massive, and there was a bold well-cut inscription. How it affected me to look down into that grave on that bright name, as it always seemed to be—CHARLES DICKENS—bright as his own gleaming face! To think that he was lying there below, looking up at me! There was a wreath of white roses lying on the flags at his feet, a great bank of ferns at his head, rows of white and red roses down the sides.'*

---

* By a direction in Dickens's will, some familiar objects that he had in constant use, such as the little articles that adorned his writing-table, were to be distributed among his friends, the choice being left to the discretion of his executrix, Miss Hogarth. By this arrangement there came to me two interesting souvenirs: One, a china paper-weight, displaying his initials in gold, a present from Mrs. Cowdon Clarke, which he regarded with affectionate interest. 'I have a reminder of you always before me. On my desk stand two green leaves, which I every morning station in their evergreen place at my elbow. . . . They are with me through the four seasons.' The other was his ivory paper-knife, which had seen much service, and was jagged like an old sword. It bore the stains, too, of his favourite blue ink. Many must have been the volumes whose leaves he had cut with this favourite instrument. I myself experience a curious feeling, as I use it in the long nights on some new book, thinking how his hand once held the knife, working with it in his rapid, energetic way.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN FORSTER.

Among the figures associated with Dickens is one of strongly-marked character, almost dramatic, a figure that seemed to be at his side through his whole course. This was that remarkable man John Forster, whose life offers a very instructive story and a useful encouragement for the literary man struggling to make his way. As I knew him intimately for many years, I am tempted in this place to furnish a fuller account than has yet been given of one who was a sort of social force in his time; who was, moreover, a cultivated writer and a most interesting character.

John Forster, Dickens's life-long counsellor and 'trusty friend'—so, indeed, he spoke of him in his will—had an intimate connection with the two journals* through their course. He read and revised all Dickens's stories as they passed through

* *Household Words* and *All the Year Round.*

their pages, and was consulted on every important matter connected with them. He was a remarkable man, and the story of his life would be well worth telling, as that of a long and memorable literary career, marked by much struggle and final success. His character was a striking and powerful one : he was vigorous, persevering, full of self-confidence, a little imperious, unsparingly contemptuous of pretenders and literary charlatans, yet ever friendly, amiable, and generous. His detractors—mostly persons whom, in Johnson's phrase, 'he had gored and trampled on'—made him out to be intolerant and arrogant. But they knew too well that he was a thorough 'disperser of humbug.'

He had the rare and admirable failing of excessive partisanship in all that concerned his friends : their merits were his own ; those who attacked them attacked *him*. In many ways he suggested Dr. Johnson. There was the same uncompromising speech, the same power of sound criticism, with the same instinctive respect for persons of rank and position, and all Johnson's softness and kindness of heart where feeling was concerned. Shortly before his death, I remember his handing me some letters of Charles Lamb, whom he had known in his youth, some forty years before ; and as he turned over the scraps of faded writing —his own name was spelled humorously as 'Fourster'—the tears came into his eyes, and in a broken voice he murmured, 'Poor, dear Charles Lamb!'

If he seemed to 'ride rough-shod' over pretence and foolishness, he had the old privilege, which Johnson, Dickens, and others had, of having passed through a period of acute struggle, when he himself had suffered cruelly from fools and pretenders. He had begun at the very bottom, and literally forced his way upwards, in spite of disadvantages of all kinds.*

* It has often been repeated that his father was in trade in Newcastle, and a certain alderman of that city is positive on this point. Mr. Elwin, one of Forster's dearest friends, when writing a preface to the catalogue of his library at South Kensington, felt himself bound in his literary conscience not to question this authority. There exists, no doubt, some feeling as to the calling in question; but the leading case of Wolsey ought to dispel such prejudice. Those most nearly connected with him declare that this is altogether a mistake, and that his father was a grazier, or farmer—an altogether different thing.

He had always a pleasant buoyant humour, often excited by a trifle. Once I had enclosed to him a letter intended for another, in which excuse was made for not keeping an appointment, and engaging to be punctual on the morrow. He returned it to me with this Johnsonian comment written on the margin:

'Sir,—Your miscalculation is worthy of one who knows not

Forster was determined to succeed. He went to the London University and began to study. During this time he was virtually educating himself, laboriously forming his fine critical taste, and making many friends. No man had a wider circle of acquaintances ; he took care to know everybody that was worth knowing, and held to them firmly through his life. Before he was twenty he had already a circle that comprised many important personages, including, as we have seen, Lamb, who paid him the compliment of saying that his only fault was that he 'did not come oftener to see him.' In the literary life it is often forgotten that friends are 'your only wear.' Friends bring connections, aids, and openings, without which gifts and talents are often found unavailing.

As I said, it is to be lamented that Forster's life has not been written, as it would offer an excellent and useful picture of the working literary man's life and struggles. He was nearly the last of the old well-trained, cultured school—of the men who look on letters as a serious thing, as a profession of dignity, to be followed only with labour and responsibility, and according to estab-

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what calculation is ; and as for your punctuality, I will believe in it when you have presented yourself at the hour fixed, but not before. I am, sir, yours as you treat me.—IGNOTUS.'

lished rules. Since his day it would seem that all fences and barriers have been broken down; readiness and facility in writing and speaking are the chief credentials; the rules of criticism are displaced by the mere impressions of the moment. *Anyone may write*—without skill or training; and what he writes is likely enough to be read: there is no standard recognised.

Several accounts have been given of him since his death, some of an official kind, and written by friends; others of a hostile cast, presenting the popular view of the 'dogmatic, overbearing Forster.' One of these latter was written, I believe, by Mr. Horne, author of 'Orion' and of that odd curio 'The Farthing Epic'—a long poem, which was actually sold at that price. They are lively accounts enough, containing many of the 'good' stories which had long been in circulation. Professor Morley prepared a short sketch of his life under the direction and inspiration of his widow—a correct, respectable piece of work. But Mr. Elwin has written a genial, masterly sketch of his old friend, touched with much art, full of sympathy, and from his long and abundant knowledge penetrating through mere accidents to the real points of Forster's fine nature. Every friend who reads this admirable tribute recognises its truth and justice. Its least merit is its good English, and the delicate discrimination with which the finer shades of character are touched

For twenty-three years—a long period of newspaper work—Forster had been connected with the *Examiner*. As contributor or editor his devotion to it never flagged. With this constant weekly servitude he had been editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for four years; and for some months, as Mr. Elwin tells us—from February to October, 1846—he had edited the *Daily News*. He wrote also many laborious essays in the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh*, each a condensed life of some historical personage, entailing singular research, expanded later into the more formal Lives.

These form an amount of 'literary baggage' that is surprising, considering that it was combined with a cheerful existence and a generous enjoyment of social life.

As his friend Elwin has pointed out, Forster was also a keen, even a vehement politician, a fine specimen of the robust *classical* type of Liberal. He belonged to the school of the English worthies of whom he has written so well. In his newspaper he put forth his principles with true vigour and spirit. No one was surprised when, in December, 1855, he was appointed to a lucrative public office, that of Secretary to the Commissioners of Lunacy. Something of this kind he had always set his mind on, and his friends knew well that what he had set his mind upon he was certain to obtain. Indeed, I recall, when he was later discussing my own prospects, he in his own robust style urged what he called 'stirring one's self.' 'As for me,' he said, 'I never gave "old Brougham" a moment's peace; I *made* him get me something.'

Readers of Dickens's life will remember the house in Lincoln's Inn Fields and Forster's rooms, where on a famous night the 'Carol' was read to a party of clever men. The sketch by Maclise is interesting from its humour and poetry. The likenesses are admirable; the fair and brilliant young man who is reading his work is scarcely idealized, in spite of the delicate aureole which is placed round his abundant locks. More characteristic, especially for those who knew him, is the likeness of Forster, who is seated apart, plainly filled with a sense of the importance of the situation, with a pregnant reserve too. This house—No. 58—will be recognised by the semicircular and not ungraceful granite porch which it shares with a neighbour, and is well known, for here was Tulkinghorn's apartment in the novel. When Forster was tenant it displayed a ceiling all flourished over with gods and goddesses, in the Verrio style. This has since unaccountably been painted or whitewashed out. There is a spacious courtyard in front, which was once that of the fine old mansion of the Earls of Lindsay. Later I found him installed in a snug house in Montagu Square—his wife's, for he had just married. But he always longed to build for himself a big and spacious house, designed to suit the taste of a literary man, and such a house he presently erected at Palace Gate, Kensington. He had been much harassed and his studies interrupted by the practising of the pianoforte by his neighbours in the Square, and he took care to have his walls detached. There was a fine library, with a gallery running round it, which he arranged so comfortably and cosily that it served as his regular sitting or reception room and workshop. Many a pleasant party was given here, for he was wonderfully hospitable, and loved to collect his friends about him at his board. I have dined at improvised dinners at which were Dickens, Carlyle, and himself, and delightfully free and unrestrained evenings they were! Dickens's manner to the Sage was always charming—a kind of grave, respectful badinage. I see his twinkling eyes now.

When I first knew Forster he was in his prime, and in all the hey-day of success. He had just released himself from his twenty years' work on the *Examiner*. His official post was an assured stepping-stone to the Commission itself. At that time he seemed to enjoy life to the full. All his greater friends were personages in town life. He was full of an exuberant buoyancy, and eagerly busy with his life of Swift and 'the Eliot,' as he spoke of it. I always admired in him his excellent and correct taste in all matters relating to art; the habits and training of criticism made him a pleasing as well as a safe guide. It was a real treat to hear him expatiate on the merits and defects of a picture. Leslie had been one of the most admired painters in his (Forster's) day; and I recollect going with him to see a collection of this artist's works, when Forster frankly expressed his disappointment at finding how thin and sketchy was his style. He was not yet prepared to make the same admission in the instance of Maclise, whose large pretentious 'Caxton' he had purchased, and which covered nearly one wall of his dining-room.*

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* This descent and decadence of Maclise is one of the most singular changes of taste in the century. His pictures

Forster had a very choice though unpretentious collection. There were portraits of friends done for himself, such as those of Landor and Dickens, with a small Landseer or two. His library is at Kensington, and speaks for itself. He had a vast number of rare things—fine prints, curious MSS., bindings, sketches, water-colours, autograph letters, etc.

It was always pleasant to listen to Forster as he uttered some critical opinion. No matter what the subject was, his views were ever thoughtful and sagacious, commending themselves by their sound sense, expressed agreeably and correctly. At his own dinners he would 'lead the conversation' somewhat after the old-fashioned way, or, as Johnson would say, he 'talked ostentatiously'; that is, in a style that would be expected from a cultured man. He had a pleasant vein of humour, too, keenly relished a good story, and could tell one with excellent effect. He was really one of the 'cheerfulest men' of his time,

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were once spoken of as those of Watts, or Searjeant, or Herkomer would be now. Long and elaborate criticisms were expended on his works. The public has settled for itself that they were rather artificial academic efforts, and but thinly painted.

and enjoyed life heartily, even in spite of terrible illness.

He was, as I have said, an admirable judge of acting, and of everything associated with the theatrical world. From his friendship with Macready and Charles Kemble, and other great players, as well as with good writers, such as Talfourd, he found enjoyment in the stage and all that was connected with it. His ardent partisanship for Macready had caused him to espouse vehemently the cause of that great but sensitive performer in his various quarrels and contentions.

When the tragedian was serving under Bunn at Drury Lane, Forster in his characteristic way walked in and out of the theatre counselling and advising his friend, utterly ignoring the 'Poet Bunn,' with whom Macready was on the worst terms. The manager's annoyance at this treatment and his dislike of the 'harbitrary' visitor is rather amusingly shown in a passage in his memoirs.

But Forster's sturdy independence and zeal for his friend made him overlook all rebuffs. In the unseemly scuffle that presently took place he was forward in directing the actor. On one occasion he himself was drawn into a quarrel with another literary man, which went so far that preliminaries were actually being settled for a hostile meeting, but the affair was ultimately arranged without bloodshed ; and in his memoir of Dickens he alludes to this business with good-humoured compunction, admitting that he had near been guilty of a folly.

I well recollect my first 'talk' with him, which was at his own breakfast-table at his comfortable house in Montagu Square, when he gave me the impression, as I find in my diary, of 'a fine-hearted, robust Englishman, with a remarkably cordial manner.' The room had the look of belonging to a man of taste, with the Maclise 'Caxton' filling up one side, and pictures, books, rare prints, etc. 'Ah! but you should have seen my Lincoln's Inn chambers,' he said, 'so vast and spacious, and crammed with books.' His talk was always that of a cultivated man ; that is, he would introduce strokes of criticism, literary stories, etc., all without the slightest pedantry. On this occasion he dwelt at great length upon Swift, and showed me all his domestic papers, including even private account-books which he had bought. This led to the topic of lunatics, who, he said, were harassing him a good deal. 'I declare,' he added, 'I think all the lunatics of the kingdom at this moment are wanting to get loose.' He next turned to Carlyle and extolled his 'Frederick,' then about to be published, and the proof sheets of which he showed me. All of that 'set' sent their proofs to Forster as a matter of course. He spoke of his discovery as to Voltaire's name, an anagram of Arouet. 'Guizot was up here the other night, but he only knew the common explanation.' He then passed to Dickens, who was on a reading tour, and who, he said, was amazingly struck by the size and expansion of everything in Dublin. He spoke of Goldsmith, and with genuine earnestness and feeling said it always grieved him so to think of the poor amiable poet's hard case. What a pity that 'he had not been better off and more discreet'! This he said in a way as full of feeling as if he had been speaking of someone he had personally known. 'And yet,' he went on, 'it was perhaps for the best; for if he had been other than he was he might not perhaps have been the *man* he was.'

There was much more of this discursive agreeable talk, which I give here as an imperfect specimen of his always entertaining conversation. What delightful evenings have I passed at that house—that modern 'Mermaid'! Nothing pleased him more than to gather his friends about him for a cheerful dinner at which you were always certain to meet someone who was interesting or attractive. And admirably arranged banquets these were, for he had excellent taste in cookery, wines, and the like, and did everything in good style, though this was also looked to by his admirable wife, whose placidity and sweetness of disposition formed a strong contrast to his own rather tempestuous nature.*

A more truly hospitable man I never met. On one occasion, coming to town, I went to see him about six o'clock, and found that he was giving a dinner that evening to, I think, some of the Orleans family. His annoyance that he could not ask his visitor was truly genuine, and amounted almost to distress. He insisted on bringing me into the room. 'Only look; you see, my dear fellow, we could not find a place.' He repeated again and again Lady Macbeth's phrase, '*The table's full!*' And so it was. It was idle to protest. More agreeable almost than these 'state banquets' were the small parties of half a dozen or so—above all, when by special privilege or concession the Sage of Chelsea attended. These were red-letter nights. It was pleasant to see Forster's kindly, and even deferential, attentions to his old friend, as though he wished to show that he felt the privilege accorded. The Sage was at his best—delightful and original, too. He had a way during the dinner of making *sotto voce* comments, directed to his plate as it were, sometimes of a contemptuous sort, such as, 'Ah, the puir, benighted creetur!' followed by a hearty chuckle.

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* He bequeathed her the use, for her life, of all his fine pictures, MSS., books, and other ornaments of his mansion, to pass later to the nation, and be preserved at the South Kensington Museum. But, with a rare self-sacrifice, she allowed the country to enter at once into the enjoyment of these treasures.

I remember the bewilderment of a simple lady from the country who sat next him, whom these comments startled. After dinner he smoked a new 'churchwarden' with a favourite tobacco specially procured for the occasion.*

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* The late Earl of Lytton, who was of the party, and myself, somewhat incautiously produced cigars; but the host shook his head gravely, with a low 'No, no.' So we put them up again. Here was Forster's delicacy: he wished the privilege to be for his great friend exclusively. I was later

He talked on as he smoked, in a pleasant *sostenuto*, with many a humorous stroke, welcomed with the heartiest enjoyment by his friend, who led the applause. He dwelt on the eternal Irish Question—then not so rife as it has since become—and seizing on some incautious speech of mine, he, like Johnson, 'tossed and gored me.' When apropos of repealing the Union he said, '*We'll cut all your throats first!*' what a roar of enjoyment! This was not to be taken *au sérieux*, yet I recall him coming to me in the drawing-room and talking long with a kind of gentle interest of some schemes I was then busy with—notably an edition of Boswell's Johnson, which he good-naturedly allowed me to dedicate to him.

A Scotch lady—one of the Chambers family—sang for him national ballads to which he listened with unfeigned delight, moving his head in time, and repeating the words in a sort of low, not very musical growl. 'Ah, Robbie Burns!' he said, 'who is there like him?' which set off our host, who gave a stroke or two of fine criticism,

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promised by Mrs. Aitken—'Mary Carlyle Aitken,' his niece—one of his favourite 'churchwardens,' which I wished to treasure as a relic, but they had all been lost or broken.

with a quotation or two. This led on to Moore. The Sage began to 'chuckle' with a sort of inward enjoyment. 'Ah, the puir Tommy! Puir Tommy — ha, ha! wi' his Bendermere roses, which he knew nothin' aboot! Puir little Tommy!'

An Irish lady was then asked to sing something for him. 'Do pläy Coolin—pläy Coolin!' said, or rather sang, the Sage, in his plaintive way. The words he recited. Some other less known tunes followed, over which he shook his head. 'Coolin' was his wife's favourite. 'No, no; I don't care for thot. No. *Play Coolin!*' And Coolin was played about fourteen times! As in Boswell's account of Johnson and Garrick at the party, Forster 'played round him,' with a charming mixture of deference and encouragement, drawing him out with consummate skill.*

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* Near me now, as I write, on a pedestal, is the large bust of Carlyle, with his great hat on, and a high-collared coat gathered about his neck—my own work. It was a great privilege for so unpractised a performer to have a sitting, and this he good-naturedly gave me not long before his death. It was rather a painful experience. He was then sadly broken, and, what was worse, desponding. I was with him about an hour, and he bore the operation with exemplary patience, protesting good-humouredly, however, that he must not be

In Forster's later days, when his health did not permit of his visiting the theatres, he still took interest in all that was going on, and nothing entertained him more than to hear from one of his friends accounts of the various stage exhibitions. He had but a poor opinion, however, of the theatrical talent of the day. When Salvini was playing, he pronounced authoritatively: 'I am convinced that — —— is *not* an actor, and that Salvini *is*.' Once he was induced to go and see, or hear, rather, 'the great Schneider,' then disgusting some and gratifying others with her 'Grande Duchesse.' His judgment was amusingly summary, delivered at a dinner-party—it might have been the grand old Samuel himself: 'My opinion is that this Schneider is neither more nor less than *a nasty old woman*.' There was much of truth in this rough judgment, for she was then somewhat antique and decayed. On another occasion I went with him to see Goldsmith's 'She Stoops to Conquer,' played by an American company, and he gave a half sort of approbation to Mr. Brough's 'Tony Lumpkin.' It was on this occa-

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expected to remain silent. The bust is certainly a likeness, or, at least, a fair reminder of this great man.

sion that he quoted and expounded Johnson's admirable criticism of Garrick, 'He does not let the gentleman break out through the footman,' the actor then playing a gentleman disguised as a footman. This has always seemed to me to be the very basis of good acting, and from it can be developed all other principles.

No one, as I have said, enjoyed life in its various phases so much as Forster, and it was pleasantly characteristic of him that any little semblance of a *festa*, such as a social dinner with one or two people he liked, a trifling excursion, or a meeting at some place in the country, was enough to put him in high spirits. Then he would be at his best, forgetting all his pains, ready to accept everything, and making himself most entertaining. A good story told to him became, as it were, a present made to him; he enjoyed, revelled in it; his broad, genuinely-hearty laugh was positively inspiring, and filled the air with good humour. He would even insist on having it repeated to his friends, that they might enjoy it also. Once I related to him an absurd scene I had witnessed in a provincial theatre, when a lady, who claimed to be a descendant of the Siddons family, recited 'The

Bells,' 'by special desire,' between the acts. She described the pealing of the bells minutely, the 'wedding-bells' being rung out cheerfully and hilariously; the 'fu-ne-ral bells' tolled out slowly and sadly; all accompanied by a movement of her arms, as if pulling dejectedly at a rope, and so on. This story used to convulse him; he would roll in his chair, almost in agonies of hysterical laughter. I do not pretend to any special gift of story-telling, but the scene was truly a droll one, and the story virtually 'told' itself. Browning presently came in, and for him the story had to be repeated, with the same frantic enjoyment on Forster's part. Some of his own anecdotes were admirable, generally turning on some delicate touches of comedy. They were always enjoyable from their introduction, having been told to him by some celebrated person. Such was the story of the Dublin deputation waiting on Chantrey to give him directions about Grattan's statue, related to him by Chantrey himself.

'See here, Misther Chanthrey, we would like ye to put him *laning on a r-r-rock*.' This with a rich native burr.

'But, my dear sirs, that is very vague. *What* rock? *Why* a rock?'

'What r-r-rock, Misther Chanthrey? Why, the *R-r-rock of the Constitootion*, av *coorse*.'

'In vain,' said Chantrey, 'I asked how this idea of the rock's being the constitution was to be conveyed in marble; but they were peremptory.'

Once during these old pleasant days came an invitation from Frederic Chapman, head of the Dickensian firm, then in Piccadilly, first as well as last of his publishers, to go down and dine at Teddington. It was in the summer-time, and no place out of hot and dusty London could be more invitingly sylvan than was Teddington, with its charming old river-side church, so dear to artists, and its antique alms-houses. We drove, Forster and I, to a rural villa, where our host was awaiting us with Browning, who was then 'making his way,' as it is called, but rather slowly. It was a deliciously cool evening after a sultry day, made cooler by the ever-charming river close by, as welcome to the jaded Londoner as it was novel. Browning, I recollect, excited my interest by mentioning that he had lately met a rather cadaverous-looking man, who, on speaking, resolved himself into Harrison Ainsworth, the author of 'Rookwood.'

Forster's devotion to his friends was, as I have said, extraordinary; they could do no wrong, but *must* be right, because they *were* his friends. For many years it was an established custom that Browning should come every week to dine, and he and Forster were on the most affectionate terms. It was a sad surprise, therefore, when, a few years before Forster's death, it became known that an absolute breach had occurred between them. I have heard particulars of the scene, which I will not repeat here, but it may be said that the poet, who was steadily rising in public and social prestige, was now not inclined to accept the friendly encouragement and 'pattings on the back' of his old friend. The breach that ensued may possibly have been owing to the enforced tax of the weekly dinner, which had outlived the early affectionate feeling, and now became a burden, when the old fires had died out.

In 1892, Forster's friends were rather startled by a strange claim put forward by Dr. Furnivall, in his favourite, eccentric spelling, to the effect that Browning, and not Forster, had actually written the 'Life of Strafford' included in the 'Statesmen of the Commonwealth.' According to this story, when Forster was writing his

'Statesmen' for 'Lardner's Cyclopædia' he fell ill, and Browning, visiting him one day, found him in sore trouble as to the difficulty, impossibility even, of completing the work according to his contract. Browning offered to take over the papers and materials, and put them in shape for the press. The book was thus completed by the poet, though Forster sent it as his own, and as his own it has ever since passed with the public.

To Forster's friends this tale seemed astonishing, and improbable in the highest degree. All who knew him were convinced that he would be the last man in the world to accept such aid; for he was too confident in the individuality of his own work to approve of any such sort of assistance. It could never have come up to his standard. He was, moreover, so strict in regard to literary honour and etiquette that he would have disdained such a trick or imposture, as he would have called it.

There was, further, a confessed looseness about the process described, which showed its improbability to anyone familiar with literary work. In the case of a historical work, a picture of a man and his times, the mere handing over of the 'materials'—papers, notes, etc.—to another to be put into form, would not suffice. In such things it is the general knowledge of the era, the personal view taken of the situation, that form the essence of the work; these cannot be 'handed over,' or treated in this vicarious way.

It would have been literally impossible for Browning to have taken up such a task. True, he was writing his own 'Strafford,' which appeared in the following year, but this was a play, for which he only needed to know the personal incidents of Strafford's history. It is enough to say that Forster had contracted with his editor to furnish him with an elaborate picture of a stormy historical period, that all the fruit of his studies was to be imported into the accounts he was to supply of the various statesmen, and that he was, therefore, the last man, as I said, to think of 'fobbing off' as his own a piece of hurriedly-vamped-up work, supplied by a friend who was known only as a poet.

Charles Kent, who was very eager in exposing this odd theory, called attention to a passage in Browning's preface to his play which demolished the whole structure at once. For here is found an acknowledgment by the poet of the assistance he had received from his friend's account of Strafford. The poet, therefore, is shown as not merely passing off his own work as Forster's, but as descending to the deception of complimenting himself! What must Forster have thought of this?*

When Forster was on one of his holidays he was specially amiable, and gave full way to his spirits. I remember once being at Bangor, when he was staying at the George Hotel. He was then really at his best, never flagging a moment; now getting up a little dinner, now making excursions or taking long walks. One day we had a rowing-party over to Beaumaris, when he sat in the stern and steered the little craft with much enjoyment. He recited snatches of poetry to us in the most agreeable fashion, without any pedantry or official solemnity, giving the best lines, and pointing out the beauties. I hear him now declaiming in his full rolling tones 'The Battle of the Baltic,' and at the close dropping his voice into a tone of mystery on the word 'El-si-nore,' allowing it to die away, as it were; then to himself, 'Fine! how fine that!' This would suggest to him another specimen.

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* Mr. Furnivall, further, tells us that it was from Browning's lips he heard the story. It is always awkward to deal with assertions of this kind, as it becomes a matter of personal credit. It may be presumed that Dr. Furnivall is not wholly mistaken, and that he actually received such a communication, though he may have misunderstood or exaggerated its import. It must be borne in mind that in later years Browning was not on good terms with Forster, and the feeling may have possibly tinged his recollections. He may, no doubt, have assisted his friend in some way, and during his illness written something, or collected materials for him, as one literary man will do for another, but it is impossible that he could have done what is claimed for him.

As I have said, he was a good actor, and had formed his elocutionary style on that of Macready. One night at his own house he read for us Kitely's jealous scenes, and, for play of features, admirable dramatic expression, and *acting* without movement, I can truthfully say I have never had better entertainment. It was a masterly performance, finished and powerful to a degree. He had a fine, well-modelled, expressive face, full of intelligence, with a placid smile, though, when roused or put out, he certainly could be 'tempestuous' enough. His wrath sometimes fell on his servants in a rather awful manner; his voice thundered, and they 'shook in their very shoes.'

No one had a keener enjoyment of character or of the comedy of life, and in his talks with inferiors, guides and the like he would entertain himself by eliciting traits of character. Once, coming to dine with a friend, and arriving before the time, the door was abruptly opened by an odd being—a worthy tailor, the cook's husband, who had rushed up *coatless*. 'No, no, my good friend,' said Forster pleasantly, 'I am not prepared for *that!* I decline to meet you; I am not your match.' Below stairs he was pronounced to be a very 'pleasant-humoured gentleman.'

At the time of his Bangor visit he was busy, I think, on his 'Life of Landor,' and he had laid out the agreeable plan of combining work and play: the mornings were to be devoted to biographical labour, the rest of the day to enjoyment. But one of those strange fits of stagnation which are so afflicting to the literary man came on him, and he could not get on with his work. There is nothing more painful than such a condition, when the sentences are wrung from you 'like drops of blood,' and you feel that the work of days is worthless, because it has no inspiration. The foundation of this feeling is a total lack of interest that by-and-by reaches to disgust. Every afternoon when I met him I could note the gloom on his face, and he would say hopelessly, 'No, nothing done—nothing whatever done!' And then wistfully, 'And you?' I was busy with a novel, and it was some comfort to find that I had been similarly afflicted; and he indemnified himself by writing down in the visitors' book the name of my story—'Mrs. Tillotson and Party.' It may be said that the practised writer becomes quite independent of moods and humours; his thoughts and words are so disciplined that if he be interrupted in the middle of a sentence, say on Monday, and he resume his work on Wednesday or Thursday, a single glance at the paper at once brings back the suspended train of thought.

Some of Forster's contemporaries, it must be owned, did not take the most charitable view of his character. He had been too uncompromising, and had 'wiped his shoes' too often on them and their failings. It was again and again repeated that he was 'pompous' and arrogant, that he and Dickens formed a 'mutual admiration society,' and the like. 'Forster, you are the *beadle of the world*,' was Douglas Jerrold's jest.

More harmless, and certainly amusing, were some of the tales circulated of his characteristic utterances, some of which attained to high comedy. He took a complacent pleasure in some of these, and I have heard him himself, when insisting on some point with a lady, say, 'You know, I'm such a *harbitrary cove!*' There was something flattering, after all, in this well-known saying. He had ascertained accurately the distance for a shilling fare from his house to his office, and would tender the amount to the cabman, for he was determined to put down extortion. A cabman summoned him, and it was proved that Forster was right: when the cabman said: 'It warn't the money, but he *were* such *a harbitrary cove*, I was determined to have him up.' The foundation of other tales was a certain dignity or importance which he would assume on occasions of state, and which rather 'arrided' his friends. These pleasant humours were not likely to escape so shrewd an observer of character as his great friend. No one 'enjoyed' Forster so thoroughly as he, and yet with the heartiest affection. It was not to be expected that he could withstand the almost irresistible temptation to seize on the points of such a character and utilize them in his writings. Here the writer was almost helpless. There were some portraits which he was almost compelled to sketch, and accordingly we find touches of Forster in 'Our Mutual Friend.'

A pleasing note of Forster's character was the hearty, generous way in which he would identify himself with a scheme on which any friend of his consulted him. If he favoured it, it became his own at once; he would grow eager about it, press it on, encourage and contribute towards it in the most serviceable way. He would enjoy ransacking his own valuable treasures; he would send for the clerk who had charge of his papers and give him precise directions for the search, and in a short time lay before his friend documents and letters sure to be of value and interest. On how many occasions have I myself benefited by this liberality! In this way, when I was consulting him on a life of Garrick that I was writing, he listened to all the details of the scheme, read portions, gave his advice; and at last one day, pointing to a long row of folio volumes which contained Garrick's vast correspondence, said: 'Now, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. I always intended writing a life of Garrick myself, but I'll hand it over to you. You shall have all my materials.'

It was the same when I was preparing an edition of Lamb's works: the faithful clerk arrived with his correspondence with the essayist, which he put into my hands. It should be remembered that the printing of such things materially impairs their commercial value; but Forster never took that view. On all such matters his ideas were of the largest.

Indeed, he had the most gentle heart, with a reserve of genuine tenderness, which was a surprise in so burly and obstreperous a being. He loved to cherish anniversaries, birthdays, and the like, and clung fondly to their recurring festivities. When Dickens's last birthday came round in 1870, Forster invited him and his sister-in-law to dine. Charles Kent has described to me how, after dinner, the kindly host drank to his old friend's health, and then in a tumult of feeling, rising up, his full glass in his hand, walked round to Dickens, and, with tears in his eyes and voice, clasped his hand and faltered, 'God bless you!' This little scene was the fitting close to a friendship of over thirty years, and brings Forster before us in his most amiable and attractive guise.

It was quaintly amusing when he gave his permission or approval to something he had settled that his friends *might* do. It was now *en train*, and as good as done. One morning he announced to me that he had made up his mind about *me.* ‘I have been thinking you over, my dear friend,’ he said, ‘and I see this clearly—you must write a comedy.’ From that moment it was settled. *He* had settled it. He often asked after the piece. But the comedy was never written.

Forster's despotic ways and general tone of proprietorship, no doubt, amused his friends, yet it was plain that this airy assertion was really no more than an excess of zeal and interest. He would do anything for his friend, and do it with success; but he must be uncontrolled, and the friend must put himself entirely in his hands. We can admire this honest, thorough partisanship. It was at most but a pleasant piece of comedy.

Once he came over to Ireland to receive an honorary degree offered him by the University of Dublin. He was much pleased at this tribute, and ‘put up’ with me. He was in his best holiday mood, enjoying everything exceedingly, and making the most—as his wont was—of small extemporized pleasures. On trying on his scarlet gown, he assumed an almost heroic state and burlesque admiration of himself.

The University was then—the authorities also—old-fashioned and unceremonious; neither had suffered the severe lessons and shocks both have since experienced. The 'Senior Lecturer,' as he was called, or some such official who regulated these compliments, was an old-fashioned, rather boorish personage, likely enough never to have heard of Forster. I remember we waited on him in a dilapidated class-room, where he stood at a high desk, surrounded by a number of lads in gowns, when the English visitor addressed himself to him in the most courteous terms, explaining how he had come from London to receive a degree, 'an honour the University had been kind enough to offer, and for which he felt deeply grateful——' Here he was cut short. 'Very good—very well—all very well. But see here now, ye must all take the oath together, and repeat it after me.' A book was summarily thrust into my friend's hand, which he had to share with two or three others of tenderer age, I looking on from a distance. The irreverent lads took it all as a joke, and roared out the Latin jargon in a sort of gabble, in which could be distinguished Forster's stately and mellifluous tones, giving out every word as though it were a matter of conscience. Most strange was the contrast between the grave elderly man and the obstreperous juvenile crew pressing on him from behind and from the side. I hear him as he came forth—'All very odd, my dear friend,' he said with a half-sigh, after a pause; 'but I suppose it will be put right by-and-by.'

Later in the day I entered the large theatre, where the degrees were being conferred. A strange, unexpected scene it was; about a score of persons were present, mostly Fellows of the college, who were going through the work in a dreary, listless way. It seems that on the last occasion there had been disorderly behaviour on the part of the students—squibs, etc.—and it was resolved to exclude them for the future, and to make the proceedings strictly private. Aloft in the amphitheatre sat my friend in his scarlet gown, beside another recipient of the honour. It was a dreary business, and he looked unhappy. I joined him as he came out, and after a long silence he at last made this solemn declaration: 'Well, there! it's over at last, thank goodness! I will only say this, that I begin to regret I ever came.'

I was rather aghast at this, and we walked on in silence. But presently he brightened. 'After all,' he went on, 'the degree is there, such as it is, and we must make the best of it.' The whole performance was indeed a comedy, the unceremoniousness of which it was no wonder that he felt. He had not long before received a similar honour from Edinburgh University, and he described to me the gala doings, the lavish civilities, the overflowing attentions, and, above all, the festive attractions of the scene—the theatre crowded to the doors, the ladies in full force, and his own very flattering reception, to which, as a literary man of high reputation, he was well entitled. In a short time, however, he had dismissed the whole from his thoughts, and was rattling away as he enjoyed the various novel sights that he encountered during his stay.

Forster was, as I have said, Secretary to the Commissioners of Lunacy, and a very able and efficient officer he was. He later became, in due course, a Commissioner himself, and, in spite of bad health, carried out his rounds of inspection with an indomitable energy and sense of duty. I remember his showing me a most wonderful work of art, a water-colour painting beautifully done, which had been given him by Dadd, the well-known artist, who was confined for life for murdering his father, I think, in Cobham

Woods. It was a picture done as in a nightmare, full of strange phantasms and wild images, mixed with sentences in an exquisite caligraphy just as wild. It seemed a sketch from a supernatural world.

It was interesting on this occasion to visit with him all the old Swiftian localities and memorials in which Dublin is so rich—notably, the tombs in St. Patrick's Cathedral and the 'tumble-down' house in Hoey's Court, a court horribly squalid, where the great Dean was born, then standing, though, I believe, it has long since been swept away. We were attended on our perambulations by a faithful yellow-haired and wiry Irish terrier, Vixen by name, in whom he took great interest. Like many other eminent men, he was partial to dogs, having a little white terrier of his own, named 'Tommy,' whose loss he took much to heart.

On this Dublin visit we went to see 'Swift's Hospital,' as it was called, the chief madhouse, a curious rambling, old-world place, somewhat decayed, and ineffably gloomy. It was situated on the outskirts of the city, close by Kilmainham Gaol. There were fine large grounds and gardens attached to it, laid out in old-fashioned style.

Once admitted, my friend assumed on the instant a thoroughly professional air, took out his notebook, and in a grave judicial way made all his inquiries. The director was impressed by his sensible remarks and criticisms. The visitor shook his head as he pointed to the bare walls of the rooms and corridors. 'No pictures?' he said. 'They would give a cheerfulness and gaiety.' In the grounds the patients crowded round him, and he spoke to them in a familiar, reassuring way. There was a poor mad priest, whom he patted kindly on the shoulder; and another complained bitterly of the doctors, governors, etc., who 'cut off his smoking,' while he had actually a lighted pipe in his hand!

Forster was at this time preparing his 'Life of Swift,' for which he had long been making the most extraordinary collections. He had spared no expense, and the papers and materials he had secured were exceedingly valuable. The mass of material, indeed, was so large as to make him recoil from attempting a beginning, and so from year to year he was putting it off. It was not until a short time before his death that he could bring himself to attack the work. He lived only to complete one volume.

Forster's 'literary baggage' is substantial : the works he has written are of a solid kind, showing a ripe knowledge and much conscientious study. Like his friend Whitwell Elwin, he was thoroughly 'grounded' in the learning and literature of the past two centuries. But it was curious that his first and his last works should have been the best ; the others, though the result of much labour and pains, were somewhat severe in style, and dealt with subjects of comparatively little interest to the general reader of our time.

His account of Goldsmith, which he first called 'The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith' —a title perhaps suggested by his friend's 'Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby'—was received with great favour. Dickens was enchanted with it. It was a very attractive book, not only from the knowledge displayed, but from the enticing style in which it was written. There was a taste and elegance then in the very designing of volumes, which in these days we seem to have lost, a grace in the illustrations, even in the laying-out of the page.*

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* He later thought this title and treatment too light and trivial, and made the book more judicial, serious, and perhaps heavy. It is now called 'The Life and Times,' etc.

Forster was revealed most characteristically in the introduction to this work. Sir James Prior—a laborious 'dry-as-dust'—had expended much time and industry in collecting everything that could be collected about the poet. He had explored the old magazines (notably the *European*), had hunted up lost scraps and fragments of Goldsmith's writing, had found out traditions, and, altogether, had collected a vast amount of information previously unknown and perhaps unsuspected. Forster, considering that these printed sources were common property, made free use of them in his book, treating them with much more art and with the judgment of a practised writer, disregarding all that was trivial. This led to angry protests. Prior contended that his work had been plagiarized. Forster, in his characteristic way, carried the war into the enemy's camp, and buffeted him severely for his blunders and general incompetence.

The essays on Steele and Foote, originally published as review articles, were singularly exhaustive, and written in an agreeable style—a style, however, that would not be adopted now, as it assumed a familiarity with, and a hearty interest in, all the characters and events of the era. It is not the fashion now to care much for those old 'exploded' days, and I doubt if even a Macaulay, with all his brilliance, could lend a charm to such topics, which are now about as dead as Marley and his door-nail.*

Forster's later historical works were chiefly enlarged and rewritten versions of his first important book, 'The Statesmen of the Commonwealth,' accounts of men connected with the Great Rebellion. These he recast on a larger scale, adding the most recent information on the subject. They became later 'The Grand Remonstrance,' 'The Life of Sir John Eliot,' 'The Arrest of the Five Members.' The 'Eliot' entailed a vast amount of painful deciphering of almost undecipherable writing. Valuable as contributions to history, they were somewhat *caviare* to the general. He seemed to have had before his eyes as a model the austere works of his friend Hallam as well as other writers of that period.

A few years before his death he wrote a life of his friend Walter Savage Landor, the copyright of whose works was bequeathed to him by their author. This was a highly dramatic subject, but one which required delicate handling. The career of this tempestuous, erratic man, his strange caprices and violent ebullitions, might have been made wonderfully attractive. He was dealt with much as a personage of the Commonwealth would have been, and rather magisterially. All the materials, however, are there in the fullest abundance, and the book can still be read with interest.

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* Some thirty years ago there used to appear works almost abstrusely historical—such as 'The Life of Charles the Bold,' by Kirk—which were ordered from the libraries, read with interest, and had a good sale. We seem to have lost this taste.

The writer supplied elaborate official criticisms of all Landor's works, suspending the narrative for this purpose. These, I have suspected, were criticisms of his own, which had figured in the *Examiner* and other journals as the works came out. They had, of course, their value as being fresh, contemporaneous utterances ; but though full of thought and weighty judgments, they are interruptions to the narrative.

Another defect is the somewhat over-indulgent view that was taken of his friend's irregularities. Forster had a fine ideal of the duties of the biographer, which, he held, should be regulated by the strictest rules of legal evidence. Justice

Stareleigh's dictum, 'You mustn't tell us what the soldier or any other man said,' was *his* ruling also; he disdained to receive any accepted gossip, or even popular truths or facts, if they had not what he considered was biographical value.

To the ordinary judge of social life Landor would seem a rather disagreeable person in many ways; and Forster, while pleading for indulgence, cannot prevent his readers drawing some such conclusion as this. The strongest plea that can be made for Landor is that his two best friends put forward favourable views of his character. Dickens's genially obstreperous portrait in the novel will always rise before those who would recall Landor, and interpose between them and the accepted traditions. The fiction would almost seem the more acceptable of the two accounts.

Prefixed to the Goldsmith is the graceful sonnet to Dickens, a public testimonial of affection for his old friend:

TO CHARLES DICKENS.

Genius and its rewards are briefly told:
A liberal nature and a niggard doom,
A difficult journey to a splendid tomb.
New writ, nor lightly weighed, that story old
In gentle Goldsmith's life I here unfold:

Through other than lone wild or desert gloom
In its mere joy and pain, its blight and bloom,
Adventurous. Come with me, and behold
A friend with heart as gentle for distress,
As resolute with fine wise thoughts to bind
The happiest to the unhappiest of our kind,
That there is fiercer, crowded misery
In garret toil and London loneliness
Than on cruel islands 'mid the far-off sea.

March, 1848.

This sonnet has been justly admired, and the 'cruel islands 'mid the far-off sea' has been often quoted, with some speculation as to what quarter of the globe was meant.

The 'Life of Charles Dickens,' the first volume of which appeared within a very short time after his death, was the most successful work of its day. This was to be expected from the attractiveness of the subject, and from the large audience in both hemispheres to which it was addressed. The twelfth edition was reached in no very considerable time. Mr. Frederic Chapman has informed me that he gave the author £8,000 for the work. The book is remarkable from its plan, which is almost Boswellian, Dickens nearly all through being exhibited by his relation with his friend, the biographer, and seen chiefly through his eyes. Little was given at secondhand. This conjunction of intimate companion and biographer occurs rarely, and is obviously the best and most satisfactory form for such a narrative, the story-teller knowing so much, and being entirely 'in the mind,' so to speak, of his subject. The truth is, that all through their joint lives Forster was Dickens's second self, and had of necessity to be constantly introduced with him. Yet there was a stupid cry raised that there was 'too much Forster'—that he thrust himself too prominently forward. It was maliciously said that the work ought to be entitled, 'The Life of John Forster, with some Account of Charles Dickens.' This unfair charge was again and again repeated, but, what was significant enough, chiefly by those who found that no place had been found for an account of *their* relations with the great writer. For Forster, strictly following out his artistic plan, had excluded hundreds of letters, accounts of personal transactions and the like, which had been effusively offered to him. It must be said that it was a most difficult task, and was accomplished with extraordinary grace, art, and success. No one else of his time could have done it nearly so well; for there is a dramatic charm and effect, with a sort of *movement* about the whole that is very taking. The skill with which the innumerable details are woven together, and the fashion in which the pith or marrow of the letters is extracted, are really extraordinary. Above all, there was shown the rare gift of knowing exactly what *value* was to be attached to the innumerable incidents and details: of discriminating what were trivial and what had real significance. Forster had this fine sense in a singular degree, and could contemptuously put aside all those unimportant trifles which seem to be essential to the ordinary biographer of the time.

Forster might have smiled at the attacks on his work, but it was difficult not to be affected by them. It is to be lamented that he gave way to the clamour, and, in the later portion of his second volume and in the whole of the third, yielded so far as to modify his plan and treatment. In these portions we find the narrator's personality almost disappear, with consequent loss of that living charm and intimate knowledge of Dickens's own mind and feelings so conspicuous in the earlier half. Letters and statements of other people are introduced more freely, together with transactions of which Forster had no personal knowledge. The result is that there is a lack of homogeneousness, the latter portion differing in style and effect from the first. Still, the book remains a very delightful record, and all who knew Dickens will recognise in every page how exact the portrait is.*

In his warm advocacy of his friend, particularly in the account of his early struggles, Forster made some broad statements as to the treatment the young novelist had experienced from one of his publishers, who is represented as eager to take advantage of the precarious position of the young writer. This referred to Mr. Richard Bentley, the head of the well-known firm in Burlington Street, which still retains his name on every work it issues. Richard Bentley was a notable figure in those days ; he had much spirit and energy, and is associated with the old Pickwickian times, now so far off, which to the writing man seem to have an almost romantic tone. The young Dickens was then editor of his magazine ; for him he wrote 'Oliver Twist' ; for him, too, George Cruikshank had designed the wonderful etchings for that book. For Bentley was to have been written, by solemn sealed agreement, 'Master Humphrey's Clock' (*i.e.*, 'Barnaby Rudge'). I shall mention later the early, spirited encouragement I myself received from this energetic man ; and, indeed, my own connection with the firm has continued for some thirty-five years. I have nothing but agreeable associations with the old house in Burlington Street.

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* The autograph collector may lament the sacrifice of his favourite wares made during the preparation of the biography. Forster had an enormous quantity of Dickens's letters, which he had preserved from the early days of their acquaintance. To save time and trouble, when he had occasion to draw on these stores, he took the prompt method of cutting out a passage with a pair of scissors, and pasting it on his MS.

Forster described the contracts made between the publisher and Dickens as 'a network of agreements' which had entangled the writer and crippled his best energies. With all my partiality for my late friend, I have always thought that this was a rather hasty judgment. If Dickens were 'entangled in a network,' so soon as he made complaint of his situation, it was the publisher himself who came to 'disentangle' him and actually set him free. There can be no doubt of this after the letter written to the *Times*, December 8, 1871, by his son, Mr. George Bentley.

From this it appeared that Dickens, who was introduced to the publisher in March, 1836, by his father-in-law, Mr. George Hogarth, had agreed with Mr. Bentley, on August 22, that two novels should be written for the price of £500 each. At this time the success of 'Pickwick' was assured, as some six numbers had appeared. It has always seemed to me a little mysterious why he should have thought of leaving his 'Pickwick' publishers, though it may have been that they required all their energies for the proper management of that one story.

On November 4 another agreement was signed by which Dickens was to become editor of a new magazine, *Bentley's Miscellany*, at a salary of £20 a month. At the close of the year the same firm published his opera, 'The Village Coquettes.' So far all had gone satisfactorily. But in the March of the following year, by which time 'Pickwick' was concluded, and had made the author famous, he, not unnaturally, thought with concern of the rather improvident bargain, as it now appeared to him, that he had made. A thousand pounds for two novels might have been eagerly welcomed some months before; but when he was receiving for a single story £3,000, he felt that a new one must be worth much more to him, and it was scarcely surprising, therefore, that he should try to obtain better terms.

There could be no question, however, that he was bound by his contract, which had seemed fair and advantageous to both the parties at the time it was made. Still, he had the disagreeable reflection that for a thousand pounds he had parted with what was worth six or even eight thousand. No change could be made except through negotiation. He was even carrying out one portion of the bargain by issuing 'Oliver Twist' in the magazine; the other story was to be 'Barnaby Rudge.'

Dickens now asked that he should receive £600 each for his two stories, and in September, 1837, it was settled that he was to have £750 for each, or £1,500 instead of the stipulated £1,000.

In February, 1839, Dickens declined to continue editing the *Miscellany*, and after many *pourparlers* fresh arrangements were made as to the two stories, Bentley agreeing to give £4,000 for the unwritten 'Barnaby,' which was to be completed by the January of the following year. This was undeniably liberal and accommodating on the side of Mr. Bentley, considering that his contract had secured him the book originally for £500. Dickens, however, now seemed disinclined to go on with him on any terms, and the upshot was that the latter agreed to rescind *this* agreement also, and finally resigned all claim to the story and its profits, as well as to 'Oliver Twist,' for the sum of £2,250. Considering that the author was to receive £3,000 from his new publishers for six months' *use* of the new story, with a share of the profits, this seems accommodating enough. On the whole, it is evident that the publisher made heavy sacrifices to please the writer, and so far from 'entangling' him, was accommodating enough to set him free, even at the expense of his own interests.

One of Forster's fast friends—and he ever grappled his friends to him 'with hooks of steel'—whom he had known and loved for many a year, was the amiable Vicar of Booton, at Norwich, the Reverend Whitwell Elwin, an interesting, cultured man, a fine critic of the older, well-trained school, deeply read, well skilled in all the niceties of literary workmanship, and simple and unpretending in his ways. I remember Mr. Thackeray addressing him in one of his letters as 'My dear Primrose,' and, indeed, he much recalled the style of the good Vicar. It was always pleasant to meet him at Palace Gate House, for Forster's friends were his friends. He had a buoyant spirit, and could tell a story with humour and spirit, to the host's delight and enjoyment. He seemed a sort of complement to Forster's character, who was 'at his best' when he was by. The pair were happy in each other's company, from the association of old literary struggles now growing dim in the distance, and of old famous friends long since passed away.

Forster had the highest opinion of his friend's taste, sagacity, and knowledge, and I have often heard his tongue 'grow wanton in his praise' in these respects. 'Ask Elwin,' 'Consult Elwin,' was his constant advice in the first or last resort; and from Elwin was certain to come, ungrudgingly given, exactly what was wanted. To Forster I owed my acquaintance with this interesting man. Like most people of fine culture, he has always seemed a little sensitive, shrinking a good deal from publicity. Most of his work was furnished to the 'Quarterlies,' where his correct, reserved, and elegant style set off a prodigious fulness of knowledge, revealed without the slightest pretence or affectation. His elaborate edition of Pope's writings, an almost monumental work, he laid aside somewhat abruptly, after issuing some volumes, and handed it over to another to complete. It remains a rather strangely composite production, the torso by Elwin, the feet and hands supplied by another, but on a different scale.

From this old friend's account of Forster I am tempted to quote some of the more striking passages, written from a thorough knowledge of the man and of his character, and touched with much delicacy. It presents him exactly as he was.

'All energetic characters,' says he, speaking of Forster's warmth, 'have their idiosyncrasies. These singularities, which are the exception, attract greater notice on a superficial and distant view than fundamental and less glaring qualities. Traits of this description have been published of Forster, and, however separately exact, would mislead if an undue place was assigned to them. Forster's temper was hasty, and in conjunction with his emotional nature there was a physical cause for this which ordinary observers did not guess—the strain upon his system from many years of unintermittent mental toil rendered his nerves intolerant of ruffles which would have passed unheeded in health ; slight contrarieties were as chafings against inflamed flesh. He would sometimes remark after one of his brief ebullitions, "I know it is wrong, but I cannot help it" ; and it was probably as involuntary as the cry extorted by a sudden access of pain, or as the irritation provoked by street sounds which have driven many an overtaxed man, as with Carlyle, to the verge of distraction. "I don't think," Forster says in one of his letters, "I mind grave troubles so much as I am fretted by light ones." Except where his deeper feelings were wounded, the effect of any vexation was momentary, and if he inflicted pain, he left nothing undone to remove the impression. His servants stayed long, and when they spoke of him, did not mention his irascibilities, but his kindness ; or if they alluded to them, it was to say that his warmth of heart prevailed over all other warmths. His real disposition was stamped on his countenance ; the storm-clouds which drifted over it left no trace, and his expression, radiant or meditative, had benevolence for its basis.'

This affectionate pleading and admirable analysis of a character carries conviction with it. The vulgar, as it is so well urged here, can only take note of superficialities and judge accordingly. It is a hard fate, however, that the public must be content with this hasty superficial knowledge. They have not time or opportunity to wait or to examine deeper. Even friends, from lack of discrimination, will often accept these outside blemishes as being of the essence of character. It is more convenient and entertaining to do so. It requires something of a fine nature to gauge truly another fine nature ; and we cannot but admire the tact and firm touch with which his friend has vindicated his character.

As delicately, too, has he dealt with the 'pomposity' so commonly associated with Forster :

'Kindred to his sallies of impatience was his propensity on some occasions to wear a more magisterial air than the circumstances might require or warrant. He did nothing by halves, and he certainly was not willing that prerogatives which belonged to any office of his should be lowered or curtailed. But the assumption of authority was not his ordinary temperament. It was only put on for the nonce, and in an instant laid aside. There could not be a less pretentious companion in private life, none who had more enjoyment in the licensed freedom of intimacy. His talk to all persons had an admixture of pleasantry and wit of a kind peculiar to himself. Thus, he told his tailor to fine-draw an accidental cut in a coat; the tailor shook his head, and replied: "It is a difficult job." "Of course it is," said Forster, "or I should have done it myself."'

'On the publication of the last volume of the "Life of Dickens" in 1874,' Mr. Elwin goes on, 'Forster, broken and tormented with pain, might have been expected to lay down his pen. He chose instead that it should drop from his hand. Habituated to ceaseless activity, rest might possibly have seemed stagnation, and he had one more cherished scheme to execute. . . . Nothing remained but to put on paper the narrative* which was ready worked out in his brain, and this was a consummation of too long a breath for his ebbing vitality. He saw the first volume through the press, his sinking frame sustained, perhaps, by the stimulus of an eager mind pushing forward to the goal, and on reaching a landing-place the collapse came with the pause. The final crisis was sudden, and he passed away in an unexpected hour on the morning of February 1, 1876, when he was verging on seventy-four.'

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* The 'Life of Swift.'

I fancy, however, that the 'Life of Swift' was taken up more in the desperate hope of distracting his pains and sorrows by some occupation, than with the idea of carrying out a long-cherished project. The book itself shows in every page the disastrous influences under which it was written, being spiritless and languid. According to the scale on which it was commenced, it would have taken many volumes to complete. After his death it was handed over to another, and the task was accomplished in a workmanlike if rather summary style. But there was no individuality about it. It is in truth a tremendous subject.

Forster's early life had been one of hard struggle, and it was his sad fate that the closing days of his career were to be also a time of painful struggle against disease and illness of the most harassing and acute form. During his last eight or ten years he had suffered from a sort of gout in the chest, which took the shape of most agonizing and oppressing coughing, and gave him hardly any rest. Every night became one long battle with this enemy, allowing him but little sleep, and leaving him during the next day exhausted and worn out. About five o'clock his enemy would reappear, and for a couple of hours he would have another of these fearful 'bouts.'

It was admirable, however, to see his indomitable spirit under these attacks. Once free for a time from his foe, he would rally his strength and even dine out, when he would be gay and cheerful, and then return home, where he knew that yet another miserable night was awaiting him. In this wretched battle he was supported by his old and faithful friend Dr.—now Sir Richard—Quain, the counsellor and comforter of many a literary man. No one, indeed, has better illustrated the truth that not merely medical science, but sympathy and interest, are important elements in the physician's aid. You welcome not so much the prescription as the encouraging words and comfort, if the man has an interest in you and has known you for years. Dr. Quain had been Forster's friend and medical adviser for many years, but, alas! in these straits he could do little more than alleviate. The terrible malady was uncontrollable, and it was only the patient's strong frame and vigorous constitution that enabled him to maintain his weary battle for so long.

During these melancholy days, during which he had at last to submit to a sort of imprisonment, he would receive his friends cheerfully, and welcome eagerly all the news of the day, literary and other. One could not sufficiently admire his unflagging courage and hopefulness. Only a week before his death—a Sunday—I was with him, when he went over some proofs which he had good naturedly been correcting for me, entering with interest into all the details of the business. No one had an idea he was so near the close of his life. And what a chequered, interesting, dramatic life it had been! He had known everyone of note in the great literary world, and had taken part in all the great literary incidents and events of his time.

Of these closing days, Mr. Elwin writes: 'A greater triumph than patient endurance is the power to be cheered by the spectacle of enjoyments denied to ourselves. Forster had this quality in a touching degree. Impelled by the contrast, he would say when crippled by fits of anguish to a friend in health, the tone of his voice accrediting his words, "It delights me to see you so active." In the last week of his life not all his bodily griefs could keep down his animation on the appointment of Lord Lytton as Viceroy of India. He instantly set to work to procure a portrait of him by Millais, assured that he should not survive to see him return, and he did not live to see him depart. . . .

'He was generous in giving. Among the forms of his beneficence was a love for making expensive presents to the young. His affection for human extended to animal friends. They were not the mere creatures of convenience or amusement, but had the rank of associates who took a hold upon his heart. His voice was not without significance among the outer signs of his disposition. When he was not excited, it was soft and musical, and its sweetness was especially noticeable in his reading of poetry, which he did admirably, though with a slight inclination to be too emphatic—the usual fault of those who, feeling beauties strongly, are anxious to convey them to the full.'

Nothing can be more just or accurate than this charming description of character. Every touch reveals Forster.

CHAPTER III.

W. HENRY WILLS—WILKIE COLLINS.

Dickens, though, as I said, always the 'life and soul' of his journal, as time went on gathered about him a number of lively writers, who insensibly imitated and acquired his way of looking at things, and his very turns of thought and style. It cannot be pretended that this almost servile copying of the master was a desirable thing, and however admirable Dickens was himself, 'Dickens and Water,' as it was not unhappily called, was hardly so acceptable. Accepted, however, it was, and for twenty years nothing, as the phrase is, 'would go down' but this facetious method of joking at the world.

The editor's system was to have a sort of permanent 'staff'—writers perfectly trained to understand his methods and wishes. These were also friends. and in sympathy with their distinguished chief. At the same time, he was ready to welcome anything new or striking from a brilliant 'outsider.' But in truth the chances of this being discoverable were remote enough, as every post brought 'shoals' of packets, which it would be impossible to consider seriously. It was professed, however, in a lithographed circular —*prix de consolation* for the rejected ones—that each had been considered; glanced at no doubt they were, or even run over; a practised eye would gather from a glance or two whether there was anything worth considering. The real 'open sesame' was the recommendation of some sagacious friend or contributor, who had read the paper in question and drew attention to it as something out of the common. Dickens, however, was always firm and uncompromising on these occasions, and in plain terms would accept, or in terms equally plain reject.

For such as remain, it is a pleasant reflection that they served under such a master, and were, so to speak, taught by him. These are not very many. They were not a large number originally, and have been reduced considerably. Gone are Wilkie and Charles Collins, Thornbury, Andrew Halliday, Charles Lever, Mrs. Gaskell, Wills, Mrs. Trollope, Charles Reade, Sir E. Lytton Bulwer and his son, Miss Martineau, the Procters, Peter Cunningham, Charles Knight, Yates, and many more.

There are now left only Mrs. Lynn-Linton, Moy Thomas, Parkinson, Charles Kent, Charles Dickens 'the younger,' James Payn, Miss Mulholland, John Hollingshead, Hamilton Aidé, Professor Morley, myself, and a few more—*rari nantes.*

I call up now before me W. H. Wills, the industrious and versatile editor, or rather sub-editor, of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round.* No better man could have been found for the post. He was really invaluable, and a model editor. He knew everybody, had the whole mechanism of 'the machine' at his fingers' ends, and was almost enthusiastic in his work. This is shown by his minute and diligent correspondence. I have literally hundreds of his letters in which he laboriously criticises every tale and essay, makes suggestions, and expends his time and labour profusely. Agreeable, thoughtful and amusing letters they always were; for, like his chief, he would put his very best into a letter. This sort of thing is not in fashion now. Perhaps we are too busy and 'the world is too much with us'; but I fancy a good deal was owing to his catching the enthusiasm of Dickens himself. A shrewd, clever man was Wills—a smart writer, as it is called—and, like so many others, he had caught up the *Household Words* manner, only a little 'cockneyfied'; for he was a thorough Londoner, and believed in his London.* With all this, there was a faint tinge of literalness or pedantry; he would take things a little solemnly, where a humorous cast might be looked for, and would see a small sort of 'fun' where the judicious might only grieve.

Dickens, who delighted in the piquancy of such characters, often had his sly but perfectly good-humoured jest at his friend's little peculiarities. Nothing indeed 'arrided' him, as Elia has it, so much as anything like 'the solemnities' in the dispositions of his friends, and he had a pleasant gift of discovering and noting them. They would often reappear in some grotesque setting, and garnished with his own delightful humour. But there was not the faintest tinge of malice in these presentations.

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* He published two collections of his contributions: the first, 'Light and Dark,' contributed to *Chambers's Journal*: and 'Old Leaves,' gathered from *Household Words*, in which there is a curious paper, also included in Dickens's writings, in which, I presume, they had an equal share, viz., 'A Plated Article.' Bibliographers may take note.

He once brought me in to pass judgment on one of the usual huge orange placards, prepared for bold advertisement, which lay outstretched on the floor, some six or seven feet long. 'Ah,' he said, with a twinkle in his eye, 'Wills, when he corrects the proofs of these things, has to lie on his stomach on a mattress!'

He loved to quote Wills's rather oracular utterances. Once he 'fell foul' of him for not having directed the printer to change the name of one of Collins's characters, when 'Wills explained that on the whole, and calmly regarding all the facts from a politico-economical point of view, it was a more triumphant thing to have *two mistakes* than one; indeed that, philosophically considered, this was rather the object and province of a periodical.' He would repeat with gusto another of his sayings, *à propos* of the preparation of the Christmas number: 'We must perpetually put ourselves in communication, with the view of dealing with it.' He liked, too, to get him to tell his favourite nautical yarn, 'The Larboard Fin;' and he would thus tempt Wilkie Collins: 'Wills will tell us the story of "The Bos'un," whose artful chaff in that sparkling dialogue played the devil with T. P. Cooke.' I must have heard, but have forgotten, the incident.

Wills had a warm heart, and would melt over the catastrophe of some pathetic narrative sent to him. I remember his greeting me once in the street, to my bewilderment: 'Oh, I am not at all pleased with you. You *shouldn't* have done that; it wasn't right. *Joe ought to have married the girl.*' He was referring to the catastrophe of some story of mine, which I had completely forgotten. He often recurred to it: 'Oh yes, Joe ought to have married the girl.' The 'Christmas Wallet' he would call the stories sent in for the extra numbers; and he spoke gravely of 'sending down sacks of Christmas matter,' to Dickens's intense enjoyment.

It is now perhaps forgotten that Wills was of the little coterie that founded the now flourishing *Punch*. He often related to me the early incidents of this venture, which were whimsical enough, and I wish now that I had made a note of them. He had many anecdotes of Douglas Jerrold, who was fond of exercising his wit, though good-humouredly, at his expense. Thus he would say, 'Wills, you remind me of a pin, only that you have got no head and no point.' This he would tell with roars of enjoyment. 'Wasn't it good?' he would ask. Once, when the gas went out suddenly, someone asked where was Wills, and it was suggested that his frail figure 'had been blown up the gaspipe.' There were constant jests on this leanness of his, which he took most good-humouredly.

In 1851, when Bulwer's comedy was being prepared, Dickens offered his friend a small part, that of a servant, on the ground that 'he would like him to be in the scheme, which cannot have too many men who are steadily, not flightily, like some of our friends, in earnest, and who are not to be lightly discouraged.' This, however, was scarcely in Wills's 'line,' and he declined the offer.

His wife, who was a very remarkable woman—one of a remarkable family—had a shrewd wit of her own. Dickens had a very high opinion of her sagacity and humour, and I have heard him quote with admiration one of her *mots*, which he thought equal to the best of the time. Talking of what are called 'strong-minded' ladies, she remarked that 'Women's rights usually ended by being *men's lefts*.' I am not sure that these were the exact words ; but such was the point of the saying.

For many years Dickens enjoyed all the advantage of this valuable aid. But in 1868, when he was in America, news reached him that his faithful friend, so long in the secrets of his mind and feelings, who for close on twenty years had managed the paper and was familiar with all its mechanism, had been thrown from his horse when hunting, and sustained a concussion of the brain. This entailed sudden and complete cessation of work ; he was sent away by the doctors, and forbidden even to write a letter. On his return home a month or two later, Dickens found that the whole business of the office was necessarily thrown upon himself, even to the arrangement of money affairs and accounts. 'And I have to get them up,' he added, 'for I have never had any experience of them.'

This was an annoying and perplexing thing. He had now innumerable people to see and innumerable matters to attend to, 'both at the office and at Coutts', which I cannot forego or depute to another.' I fancy he must have had some assistance from Wilkie Collins ; but though the situation was most embarrassing, he met it with spirit and resolution, and we find no complainings in his letters.

There were still hopes that Wills might recover. But when he made attempts to resume work, the symptoms returned. I remember his describing to me with graphic power his sensations. 'You cannot conceive,' he said, 'what a terrible thing it is to be conscious of *doors flapping and slamming inside your head.*' Dickens waited patiently, hoping that he would in time be able to return ; but, after a year had gone by, it was found to be out of the question, and steps had to be taken for filling his place. Dickens resolved to make his eldest son Charles sub-editor, whom he found to be 'a good man of business, and to evince considerable aptitude in sub-editing work.'

Wills retired to the country to Welwyn, not far from Lord Lytton's seat in Hertfordshire, where he set up as 'a squire,' having made money in some financial speculations. Here he lived pleasantly and hospitably, often asking down his old friends to stay from the Saturday until Monday. I often saw him, and he was always the same cordial, pleasant Wills as of old. He died not many years since. His clever wife, who was the sister of William and Robert Chambers, survived him until the December of 1892. She was, as I said, a remarkable woman, and eminently Scotch.

Of all the contributors, the one who had perhaps the largest share in the success of the journal was Wilkie Collins, or more correctly William Wilkie Collins. He was then a rather brilliant young man—pleasant, lively in talk, of much industry and enthusiasm in his calling. Dickens was very partial to him, and found great enjoyment in his company. They were constantly together, dining or 'foraging in the City,' making expeditions over the country or acting, during that 'splendid strolling,' as Mr. Forster has called it.

It was at a dinner-party—a very special one—given by Wills at Gloucester Gate that I first met Collins. This was 'offered' to the 'chief' himself and his daughter; and among other guests were Collins, Dr. Lankester—then a somewhat conspicuous personage, now forgotten—Mrs. Procter, and a few more. I was struck by the cheery, exuberant tone of Collins's 'talk'; he seemed to *pose* as a conversationalist, and to take the lead. His talk certainly was bright and entertaining enough. Dickens was not so conspicuous, but still effective, striking in, as he did now and then, with some pleasant, sly, or humorous comment. After dinner I remember his 'rallying' me on two books I had written—'The Life of Sterne,' and that of 'Dr. Dodd'; and he was very delightful on what he called this *penchant* for 'my two model parsons.' Collins, however, entered gravely into the discussion of the fate of 'the unfortunate Dr. Dodd.'

At this dinner I recall Collins describing, in his fluent, dramatic way, how he was subject to a curious ghostly influence, having often the idea that 'someone was standing behind him,' and that he was tempted to look round constantly. Dickens talked in a very interesting way of keeping a diary, and its importance. He discussed the proper mode of doing so *secundem artem.* He did not directly say that this was part of the mechanism used by the literary man—his stock in trade—but he seemed to imply it. On this occasion was planned my first visit to Gad's Hill, and Dickens, in his own thorough business-like fashion, had his note-book out in a moment, and was pencilling down eagerly the directions as to trains, etc. I have the little scrap before me at this moment.

At another dinner I recall his making this remark: 'It is an odd and curious thing, that whenever I have drawn a character from life, it has been pronounced by the public to be unreal; but when I have drawn entirely from my own imagination, it has been pronounced to be so lifelike.' This was, of course, merely his own observation; for the public could not know in either case where he had found his originals.*

Collins had early attracted attention by an agreeable little book, called 'Rambles beyond Railways,' now rather scarce; but he soon found his way to 'Household Words.' His passion for writing was extraordinary. Indeed, no one but the genuine writing man knows how absorbing this taste can become, and how 'flat' everything is apt to seem in comparison. Collins's first attempts in the journal were short stories of a ghostly or mysterious tone; and in their way these are very complete and perfect things. Such, for instance, is 'The Terribly Strange Bed,' his first contribution, with its slowly descending top, soon to crush the sleeper out of existence.

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* Some of the best passages that Dickens ever wrote will be found in his letters to Wilkie Collins. There is a parody of Johnson's and Boswell's talk, which is irresistible, and far better than Chalmers' old one. No doubt he wrote to Wilkie with more freedom and gaiety than to anyone else.

At one time, not long after Dickens's death, Wilkie Collins conceived the idea of giving readings of his works here and in America. He determined to make his *coup d'essai* at a morning benefit for some charity or deserving actor. The theatre was the Olympic, and I was standing at the door when he drove up and descended with a rather complacent air. He chose this piece of 'The Terribly Strange Bed.' He appeared at his desk as a very portly, comfortable-looking personage in spectacles. At that time he had grown rather bulky in his figure. It must be said the reading was of a singularly tame kind, without any emphasis or the least notion of dramatic effect. He read in a very low tone, but was apparently quite satisfied with himself and the performance. He dwelt much on the word *bed*, as if there was something funny and piquant in the notion. Clever man as he was, the impression he produced was that of all things in the world he had selected the one for which he was the least fitted. A really sagacious person is usually adroit enough to make a *show* of doing the thing, and will have picked up some notions by imitating others. He ought, at least, to have among his gifts the easy art of avoiding the appearance of failure. Collins concluded as he began, with an air of complacent satisfaction. He went to America, I believe, and read there, but without any success.

It was an amiable weakness in Dickens that, when his affections or partiality were concerned, he magnified all merits in proportion. A fairly good thing, done by a friend of his, became 'really most striking,' or 'one of the most remarkable stories I have ever read,' etc. Thus 'Hide and Seek' was the cleverest novel he had ever seen 'written by a new hand . . . in some respects masterly.' His praises of the 'Woman in White' and 'No Name' were almost extravagant. No doubt he viewed them a good deal from the editor's point of view, as being admirably suited to his purposes and exactly what he wanted.

'Basil,' Wilkie Collins's first regular novel, was in some portions powerful enough, though coarse in treatment and subject. I fancy he did nothing so genuine or spontaneous afterwards, when he fell into mechanical, artificial methods. I remember the story perfectly, though it is thirty years and more since I read it—the hero falling passionately in love with a girl in an omnibus, the pursuit, and various degrading stages of the miserable passion ; the rival of low life, one Mannion ; the plot to entrap him by pretending to reciprocate his affections — all these were powerful elements and deeply impressed Dickens, with whom the book was a favourite.

Dickens found the society of his friend so congenial, and their intimacy became so close, that by-and-by he admitted him to the honours of regular collaboration in the Christmas numbers. At first he and Collins divided the more important stories of the number between them, but later they began jointly to construct the framework of the stories. I cannot but think that Dickens somewhat suffered by accepting this assistance. Wilkie Collins's style was altogether different from his own, though the former tried hard to adopt the special tone and peculiarities of the greater writer. His work always seemed rather forced and a little pretentious, and was presented with a formal air which contrasted with Dickens's superabundant spontaneousness. The most ordinary reader could not fail of noting their respective shares.

'The Woman in White' was the chief

attraction in *All the Year Round* for the year 1859. Readers followed its ingeniously tortuous plot from week to week with extraordinary interest, and it must be admitted that the details were worked out with singular ingenuity and a crafty suspension and protraction of the incidents. I confess that I never could share this admiration, as the story seemed to me to be altogether artificial, and laid out with little regard to nature; it lacked heart and spontaneousness. The characters were mechanical, not drawn from real life, but modelled after theatrical conventions.

Count Fosco, the Italian, of whom the author was particularly proud, was a sort of stage Italian, after the pattern of Dickens's own foreigners—a kind of standing type which all his followers copied.*

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* It was Dickens, too, that invented the device of imparting a foreign tone by translating French idioms literally, such as, 'If madame would give herself the trouble,' 'Perfectly,' 'In effect,' 'Holy Blue,' etc. It was almost comic, indeed, to see, in all the French stories written by his disciples, how ludicrously this system was developed. I remember myself furnishing a number of tales of French life and character, in which the details were worked out after this unreal, fanciful method, and with all the accuracy and minuteness of an observer who was on the spot and had sojourned in the country all his life. These pictures must have affected a

Another feature in Wilkie Collins's work was his odd interest in the secrets of servant-life, which he seemed to think were of extraordinary value. The housekeeper's views, the 'still-room maid's' opinions and observations, were retailed with much minuteness, and made to influence the story. Such things are below the dignity of official narrative: for it is notorious that the opinions and judgments of servants are not only valueless, but are often actual distortions of the truth. Still, there are many persons who have a strange reverence for butlers' and housekeepers' views on things in general.

Some amusement, too, was caused by his fondness for introducing formal 'narratives' or 'statements' made by these personages—an artificial and rather clumsy method of carrying on a story. Still, with all these blemishes, the work had much success, and at once gave the author a reputation. But where Collins was deficient was in humour or comic power—points in which he really fancied

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Frenchman very much as the French sketches of English life, dealing with 'Lord Tom-Bob,' and such things, affect us. We drew these sketches entirely from our imagination; and if the reality did not correspond, so much the worse for the reality.

that he excelled. His pleasantry, such as it was, was purely verbal ; he had no idea of comedy or of comic situations. He always seemed to suggest the idea that he was embarrassed with his little jest.

It was Dickens who introduced and developed the system of utilizing tours and excursions, by supplying lively or humorous accounts of them for his journal. People, he felt, were always eager, though they were themselves familiar with the scenes in question, to know how they struck *him*. It was thus that in 1857, in company with his friend Wilkie, he planned an expedition into Cumberland, for the special purpose of writing about it. This took shape as 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices,' which filled some numbers.

Dickens's share is, of course, in his lively, sparkling style, contrasting with that of Collins, who was more than usually impressive, if not pedantic, especially when he would be humorous also. It was when coming down Carrick Fell that Collins slipped and 'horribly sprained' his ankle, and was carried home by the intrepid Dickens and the landlord of the inn under difficulties. There was compensation in this incident, which was welcomed as melodramatic, and worked up by the 'Apprentices' into an almost tragic business. Dickens's scenic imagination often heightened the dramatic element in such things. It was delightful to note how his ready fancy instinctively saw something humorous in every image—as when the unlucky Collins was supporting himself on two sticks, he likened him to 'the gouty Admiral in one of the old comedies.'

Wilkie Collins's brother Charles was an interesting figure—a quiet, reserved being, a martyr to ill health, suffering agonies from an internal malady for which no remedy could be found. Yet he was always gentle and cheerful. He had begun as an artist, and had been one of the original pre-Raphaelite *clique;* but his passion was to be an author, which the fact of his having married one of Dickens's interesting daughters encouraged. With the leading writer of his day as father-in-law, he might hope for every advantage. But it must be owned that, with much enthusiasm, he was but imperfectly gifted in this way. He, however, wrote a most agreeable book of travels, a 'Cruise upon Wheels,' which was, in fact, an account of his wedding tour through France from Calais. A horse and carriole were hired in this town, and the adventures were described with great minuteness. Imaginary names and characters and conversations were introduced, after the model set by Dickens himself, which in those days were considered an essential element. This system would hardly be accepted now, as it leaves everything very indistinct, fact and fiction being thus confused. These abundant and very facetious conversations, it is felt, must have been written 'at home at ease,' and impart an artificiality to the tone.

His 'Cruise upon Wheels' is pleasant reading. There is a freshness and tone of enjoyment in the long journey across France, which is communicated to the reader; but too much importance, no doubt, is given to trifles; reduced in length by one third, it would make a very agreeable work. This, however, was the complexion of his mind, and there was much the same in his greater brother's. I remember his expounding at great length and with great earnestness his recipe for seasickness, which consisted in holding a tumbler filled to the brim with water, the eyes fixed on it, so as to preserve the balance and spill not a drop. This he would attempt to enforce with much gravity and scientific detail, to the enjoyment of his hearers, who rallied him unmercifully on his new system.

He was, however, most eager to write a novel, and at last induced his father-in-law to give him an opening. I recall Dickens bringing me into his room to give an opinion on the orange poster whereon was inscribed the name of the new story. He wished, he said, to try the effect. It was called 'At the Bar.' At one time there was an idea that he should illustrate one of Dickens's serials, but this would have been quite beyond his strength, as the author soon saw, but he was allowed to furnish the cover for his numbers. He had a pleasing vein of humour, and he was much loved by his friends.*

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* He was at one time appointed by the authorities at a South Kensington Exhibition to collect specimens of all the newspapers published in the kingdom. In this odd pursuit his pleasant humour was much tickled by many surprisingly-named journals which he came across. He gave the palm for state and bathos to *The Skibbereen Eagle*, which he could never name without genuine laughter.

CHAPTER IV.

G. A. SALA—WALTER THORNBURY—EDMUND YATES.

At one period Dickens was joined by a writer who was later to be one of the 'smartest' men on the press. There was then 'on town' a set of writers—young and somewhat Bohemian—such as the Mayhews, the Broughs, Godfrey Turner, Edmund Yates, Albert Smith, who were much mixed up with theatres and the writing of criticisms, plays, and burlesques. This dramatic connection gave 'a sparkle' to their writing. Of this pleasant band Dr. Strauss has given a graphic account in his pleasant volumes, 'The Old Bohemian.'

George Augustus Sala was the son of a once popular operatic singer, Madame Sala. When 'Boz' was producing his pieces at the St. James's Theatre, we find her performing in 'Harmony Hall' on the nights when the 'Strange Gentleman' was being performed. Her son has on different occasions furnished sketches of his early struggles in theatrical and artistic directions. With perseverance it is likely that he would have made a reputation as an artist. The force of circumstances and his natural taste, however, showed him where his real strength lay.

Dickens was much struck by a paper which he sent in as a contribution to one of the earlier volumes of *Household Words*. It was called 'The Key of the Street,' a truly remarkable and powerful account of the all-night wanderings of a homeless man in London. It was, of course, founded on actual experience, and was one of the first of those personal records of real hardship and suffering, endured by way of experiment, which Mr. James Greenwood, as the 'Amateur Casual,' later brought into fashion.

Sala has always been one of the few writers who have a distinctly individual *style*—a brilliant one, too, a sort of mosaic of quotation and odd conceit, familiar and piquant, here and there faintly cynical. It might have been taken to be the beginning of a reaction against the amiable optimism introduced by Dickens and his numerous imitators.

Edmund Yates, in his memoirs, relates a little incident which is curiously illustrative of the manners of the day. He describes how—in 'the fifties'—a party of noblemen and gentlemen were supping together at Lord Stafford's, when the talk turned on a paper in *Household Words*, called 'Colonel Quagg's Conversion,' of which they were loud in praise. Albert Smith was sent off to fetch the writer, whom he found at 'Rule's Oyster Shop in Maiden Lane,' and brought back with him. It was Sala. It would be difficult nowadays even to imagine such a thing occurring. Noblemen have no such keen interest in periodical writing, nor would they dream of eagerly inviting a 'sparkling' author in this way. Sala was then a young man of about six-and-twenty, and his old friend Yates, with the natural warmth of old friendship, declares that there were papers of his in the *Household Words* of the period—say, from 1853 to 1856—'which Goldsmith or Lamb might have been proud to father.'

This 'Quagg' story suggests Shirley Brooks, whom I never met, though I wrote for some magazine that he edited. My old friend and publisher, Mr. W. Tinsley, used to supply him with any books that he fancied, a tribute which some of our more good-natured publishers are often inclined to pay in the instance of influential clients. Some, not disposed to go so far as this, will *lend* their new publications. A 'Life of Dumas' which I had written brought from him this comment :

'6, Reed Terrace, Regent's Park,
'*December*, 1872.

'For a selection of books, all very acceptable, accept my best thanks. The "Life of Dumas" I have read with great pleasure. It is the best book that Fitzgerald has yet written, and I believe that he will obtain a front place as a biographer. I thought that he admired Garrick a great deal too much ; but in this book he has dealt out severe justice to a mountebank of real genius. It's very pleasant to read a life written on sound principles. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. F., so what I say may be worth your hearing, *sine grano*.

'If you publish this little volume of Sala's that contains the "Conversion of Colonel Quagg," the most humorous thing of the present year—if you publish it, will you give me the book ? I am always talking to people about Quagg, and I am asked how his conversion is to be heard of.'

Sala's vivacious pen now became a great attraction in the journal. He would describe London life with great vividness, setting it off with his own quaint reflections and comments. By-and-by, as he was employed on the newspapers, he acquired a taste for describing excursions and foreign cities, and it was thought by Dickens that an account of Russia and Russian life done in his lively 'word-painting' style would be of interest for the reader. Dickens had introduced a special form of describing foreign travel and little known cities—that is, to present them to the reader's eye by tracing likenesses to things at home, and garnishing with a good deal of facetiousness. This is what now would be called 'up-to-date.' It was a very brilliant and entertaining method of description, and depended, it will be seen, altogether on the writer's moods and humours and fashion of looking at what he saw. Sala has always excelled in this method, and there is scarcely a quarter of the globe that he has not described in this way.

Presently he was despatched to St. Petersburg, and very soon his brilliant papers began to appear. But after a goodly number had come out it was noted that the agreeable traveller did not get very forward in his travels, that there were abundant comments and reflections which were characteristic and amusing, but not so much as could be desired of Russian incidents.* I could well fancy that this was to be accounted for by his eager sense of the responsibility of his task, and his ardour to do it as well as possible.

By and by this clever man, who had written many piquant short stories, conceived that he could deal with a work of 'longer breath,' as the French call it. And Dickens, who had great faith in his general ability, consented to give him an opening in his journal for a regular novel. This was called 'Quite Alone,' and started under the fairest auspices. It promised dramatic interest of a powerful sort; but after a good many numbers had appeared there were ominous signs that the worker was 'getting aground,' or that he was tired of his work. This disastrous state of things is known to more writers than would be imagined, and arises from having made a brilliant start, without having planned the course and finale of the story. In such cases we are quite enthusiastic at the beginning, and trust that the proper inspiration will come when wanted.

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* The book had much success when republished in orthodox form by Mr. Bentley, and reached a second edition.

At last, at one unpropitious moment of stagnancy, 'Quite Alone' stopped altogether: no more 'copy' came in—a state of things that called for desperate remedies. Andrew Halliday, a capital specimen of the practical hodman of letters, who would do, or attempt to do, anything, was called in, and at once took up the threads of the interrupted narrative, summoned up such enthusiasm as he could, and in his own style brought the story to a conclusion. The public generally did not know of this, though they may have noticed the change of style and missed their ever crackling, sparkling, and brilliant George Augustus.

On another occasion, when Wilkie Collins—then busy purveying a serial story to the paper—was suddenly seized with illness, Dickens himself contemplated striking in and doing his work. One could almost wish to have seen this curious experiment tried, and what would have been the result of the pupil's conceptions being thus treated by the master in person.

This connection with Dickens's papers was to have a sobering influence on Sala's style. He had been accustomed to write in a somewhat 'rollicking' and familiar tone, but he now began to be more serious and deliberate.* At the present moment, like so many clever men, he has a journal of his own, in which he can talk to a public who are very partial to him and know his ways. For myself, I have always had a great regard for him personally, equalled only by my admiration for his really brilliant gifts. He touches nothing that does not sparkle under his treatment. His letters scintillate and exhibit the same 'crackling' gaiety and spirit as his more official writings. A few will be welcomed in this place.

When my 'History of Pickwick' appeared, my friend, who is Pickwickian *au bout des ongles*, was delighted with the subject, and devoted one of his lively leaders in the *Daily Telegraph* to it. Later he sent a pleasant little Greek epigram, apropos of Justice Stareleigh's deafness and misapprehension of 'Daniel Nathaniel':

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* What pleasant reading used there to be in *The Welcome Guest*, with its interesting 'Twice Round the Clock,' a dramatic account of the hours of day and night in London! A 'Twice Round the Clock' of the present day would be a wholly different thing, and might be worthy the attention of this clever man. Equally pleasant were Sala's stories, 'How I tamed Mrs. Cruiser,' and the lively accounts of his travels, 'Make your Game,' when the Homburg of the old days was presented with much vividness.

'125, Victoria Street, S.W.,
'*Tuesday, seventeenth March*, 1891.

'THE "HISTORY OF PICKWICK."

'MY DEAR P. F.,

'I think this will cap your Sergeant Robinson Deaf-Judge story:

Δυσκώρῳ δύσκωρος ἐκρίνετο καὶ πολῦ μᾶλλον
  ἦν ὁ κριτὴς τούτων τῶν δύο κωφότερος
Ὧν ὁ μὲν ἀντέλεγεν τὸ ἐνοίκιον αὐτὸν ὀφείλειν
  μηνῶν πένθ᾽ ὁ δ᾽ ἔφη νυκτὸς ἀληλεκέναι
Ἐμβλέψας δ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὁ κριτὴς λεγει ἐς τί μάχεσθε;
  μήτηρ ἔσθ᾽ ὑμῶν ἀμφότεροι τρέφετε.

ΝΙΚΑΡΧΟΣ.

'Always,
'G. A. S.

'*Englished by G. A. S.*

'The Plaintiff, John Doe, was as deaf as an adder,
More deaf the Defendant, one Roe, and, what's sadder,
Much deafer than both was the Judge, thronèd high,
An intricate action of trover to try.
Doe claim'd many drachmas for rent left unpaid;
But Roe, in defence, with great emphasis said
"It was always by night that his corn he did grind."
Quoth the Judge, looking down, "Why not be of one mind?
*After all, she's your mother: why can't you agree
To keep her between you and let the law be?*"'

This cheerful being could laugh and make merry over his afflictions. In a lively, jocund vein he would write: '*Come and hear my new cough.*' 'So brief and hurried was our colloquy at the Lyceum,' he wrote to me, 'that perhaps I did not make you clearly comprehend that since I saw you I have been asked to do the letter-press for a special extra number of the *Illustrated London News*, about the Prince of Wales's visit to India. It is a case of sixty closely-printed columns. I only began on Friday night' (this was Monday), 'the first sheet goes to press to-morrow, another last proof must be corrected on Thursday. I had to work all night after you saw me, and as the mills of the gods at the *Telegraph* grind quickly, and exceeding large, I am obliged, in addition to this task, to give them their quota every day.'

'49, Gower Street,
'Bedford Square.

'(Observe this new and eminently *bourgeoise* address.)

'You were to have come to see me at my late residence at Brompton a long time ago, to see if my volumes of the old *Examiner* (1809-1840) contained anything valuable to you from a Brightonian point of view; but you were then going out of town, and it strikes me that I also, since you wrote, have been "out of town," even among the orange-groves of Granada and the flower-farms of Morocco. But I am *not* going to India.

'Dr. Thomson's MSS.—Well, all I know about them is that you will find mention of them being in the Ashmolean Museum. There are extracts likewise from the doctor in Chambers's "Book of Days," that stupendous monument of hackwork compiled by anonymous martyrs at £2 a week, for the advantage of clergymen.

'The Chambers, however, were unable to conceive the grand importance of making *one* grubby stereotyped cast of a wood-engraved block do duty in half a score of publications.

'P.S.—That little column of mine (which I love very dearly) in the *I. L. N.* is very difficult to write. You have to address an audience among whom clergymen, old maids, and people who live in country houses preponderate. They all want gossip, and are not averse from scandal; but woe to you if you tread on one of the corns of their prejudices; and nearly all your readers are centipedes.'

'I would to goodness I could review your "Johnson" as it deserves to be reviewed in the

D. T. I don't know even whether a notice of it has appeared in our "Book Market." I was determined to say one word as to what I thought about it in a leader. With regard to Brighton and George IV., I have but two practical suggestions to make. First, trudge painfully through the files of the *Examiner*, between the years 1812 and 1825. You know the *Examiner* people loathed George IV., but in addition to a mass of spiteful gossip about the Pavilion, I remember a special story about the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert at a review, and another about the Regent and the Allied Sovereigns all getting drunk between Portsmouth and Brighton in 1814. You will find references either in reviews or in advertisements in the *E.* in the volumes bearing on that period. I have a complete set of *Examiners* here, and should be delighted to lend them to you if you didn't mind the drudgery of wading through them. To me such drudgery is delight. Twenty years ago, convinced that I was not destined to succeed in literature, I deliberately educated myself for a course of journalism by reading, abstracting and indexing the *Examiner*, Cobbett's complete works, and the *Edinburgh* for its Radicalism and Whiggery, and *Blackwood*; the *John Bull* and the *Quarterly* for their Toryism; and all the success I have had in newspaper work—not much—I ascribe to the store of facts I gathered in that galley-slave toil. Incidentally, in the course of this reading, I picked up a number of anecdotes on all sorts of topics—*et voilà le secret de Polichinelle.*

'Second. Remotely, you might get a great deal of Brighton gossip out of that peculiarly blackguard book "The Memoirs of Harriette Wilson," whom I remember, a wonderful old hag, who lived on lucifer matches and gin in a little hovel at Chelsea, but with a bright eye and a skin as white as milk. The "Memoirs" (written by one of Stockdale's hacks) are full of lies; but the personages mentioned really did live and—she mentions their names even—may suggest facts bearing on the epoch. Harriette was of French extraction. The sister, Sophie, married Bochsa, the famous harpist, who subsequently ran away with Sir Henry Bishop's wife. If you will borrow the *Examiners* I will send them to you by parcels delivery.'

'I have a long-standing engagement for to-morrow. Please ask me again some day, but not on a Sunday. It is our day for asking people to come to us, and Mrs. S. has already torn out several of my eyes for pledging myself to-morrow. I had a fine, promising young catarrh (caught at the Abbey wedding, and fostered by the Savage Club Banquet), when I had the desperate rashness to go to the Irving first night. To have witnessed the performance in a Welsh wig, and with a hot warmer under one's ulster, would have been quite imprudent enough ; but evening dress and the draughts in the theatre cooked my goose completely. I have passed five days and nights in the agonies of bronchitis and spasmodic asthma, and if I go out to-morrow it must be in a blanket.'

He then gives a Greek quotation : 'As Negroponte observed to Gladstone in the cursive Greek, which so gravelled Mr. G.'

'My dear P. F.,

'I am temporarily away from my library, and have only a solemn work—Sir John Hawkins' wooden and spiteful Life—with me (*infamously* indexed), and cannot for a moment turn on my lanthorn to the lines from Shenstone and the inn at Henley. But, on the grand old principle of meeting one question by asking another, can you tell me anything about a story of Dr. Johnson spitting out a potato, or an oyster, and saying "A fool would have swallowed it"? My memory must be getting very shaky, for I am unable to remember the story.

'P.S.—I brought your George IV. here (York Road, Brighton), and I mean to (D.V.) Grangerise it with portraits and caricatures into four big volumes.'

Perhaps the most industrious and hardworking of all the contributors was Walter Thornbury, whose line was the 'boiling down' in his little 'pot' all the antiquarian details that concerned old localities, old trials, startling adventures and the like. These he treated in what was considered a dramatic fashion, often unconsciously departing from the exact facts, or exaggerating, to produce dramatic effect. He affected to see these remote events as though he had been present, and to revive the actual talk and manner of the persons. In time it became wearisome, and the reader turned away from these narratives, which he felt were unrealities.

Thornbury, as I have said, was prodigiously industrious, and made himself not a little useful to the publishers. His 'Life of Turner,' though written in a too exuberant strain, is an interesting and meritorious book, for his knowledge of art was considerable.

One of his most attractive ventures for *All the Year Round* was a long series of papers—there were two series, indeed—entitled 'Old Stories Retold'; that is, accounts of the innumerable curious episodes, adventures, trials of English social life, murders and the like, which had long been forgotten. Dickens took great interest in this happy 'find.' No one was more curious in such matters or had a better knowledge of them than he. It was wonderful, indeed, to find how well-read he was in all such out-of-the-way topics; and in stories of failure of justice, as in the case of Sarah Malcom, he knew all the points of the case, and made it a matter of personal feeling, almost as though some living person were concerned. Thornbury was accustomed to submit to Dickens a list of likely subjects for his advice or approval. This was one of the pleasant incidents in connection with the journal, the occasional 'dropping in' for consultation on subjects and treatment of subjects. Tuesday was the day for the chief's visit to town, and he would cheerfully welcome anyone that he knew. There were the two glass doors facing one another on the first lobby, one marked in black letters 'Mr. Dickens,' the other, opposite it, 'Mr. W. H. Wills.' Sometimes he would be at lunch, of which the visitor would be invited to partake.

Thornbury, in 1859, made an excursion to Ireland, and wrote in the journal an account of his adventures entitled *Her Majesty's Irish Mail.* He described, after the pattern of Thackeray's 'Sketch Book,' some of the local oddities he had witnessed. This excited a perfect storm of reproaches, and even fury. Dickens was accused of prejudice and ingratitude to the nation who had so recently 'poured their gold and silver into his pockets,' during his recent visit when giving his readings. An angry Dubliner, signing himself 'An Irish Male,' drew up a formal indictment, in which the novelist was severely 'lashed.'

Thornbury, confounded at the excitement his careless allusions had caused, wrote to defend himself. 'I did not think that jokes at a cow-doctor fond of whisky, some street beggars, and an unpunctual coach, could offend even the most sensitive of human creatures. While thinking it unnecessary to defend Mr. Dickens from anything so absurd as a charge of calumniating a country to which he has nothing but goodwill, I beg to say for myself that I thought my description of a reckless drive through the lovely county of Wicklow was a harmless jest which would amuse and could not annoy; and retaining my own opinion on this subject, I am sorry at the tone assumed at so trifling a sketch.'

This was not a very judicious plea. The true ground would have been that the conductor, though he might admit such papers into his journal, could not be assumed to share its opinions. I also having published a sort of defence in one of the local papers, he wrote to me: 'I am heartily obliged for your letter; I had previously seen it, and felt very thankful to the writer of the extraordinary coarse and unreasonable attacks I have seen on myself personally, so easily elicited by an innocently meant article, in which I saw no harm when I read it in proof, and the desperate offence of which I do not even now understand. I will only remark that it has amazed me for life. The English language is nearly new to me in such an association. . . .' These explosions he always dreaded, and he took exceeding pains in the supervision of contributions to protect himself from such dangers.*

Thornbury's latter days were clouded and unfortunate. He sank into dejection, and for a time was under the delusion that he was at the end of all his resources, intellectual and others. There was much astonishment and sorrow at the Guild of Literature when a formal application for pecuniary aid was made by him. The need of it seemed so impossible that diligent inquiries were set on foot, and it was discovered that this was but a part of his delusion.

Another of Dickens's brilliant 'followers' was Edmund Yates, then a young fellow in the Post Office, but who together with his official duties followed paths of a more 'primrose' kind. He was play-writer, story-teller, dramatic critic, general newspaper man. He may be also considered the inventor of that form of familiar observations upon 'Society' matters, which has now come to be thought so important or necessary. Dickens always relished his pleasant vivacity and knowledge of all that was going on in the busy writing world.

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* One local gazette used language which almost rivalled that of another gazette published in Eatanswill: 'We must come to the conclusion either that this article was a studied insult to Ireland on the part of Mr. Dickens, or that he cares so little for the public that any trash may be published with impunity under his name. . . . It puts us in mind of the occasional Donnybrook revivals of Paddy Kelly's Budget: were the style and language good, the falsehoods might be forgiven; *but here they are like venomous reptiles disporting in a vessel of the most disgusting filth.*'

The fact of his being the son of an actor, and the bearing of a good stage name, was no doubt a recommendation. Edmund Yates was destined to have a life of struggle, and one not unadventurous; but he fought the battle with ardour and enjoyment, and with success. At last he reached assured prosperity, having succeeded, in spite of much discouragement, in founding that now important paper, the *World*, a scheme peculiarly his own, and pursued for many years—as I said, from the early days of the 'fifties.'

Some twenty years ago I was going over with a large party upon the first trial of the ill-fated *Bessemer* steamship, and recall his telling me on the deck, with a certain elation, that he had at last succeeded in what had been an aim of his whole life—the founding a paper of his own, to be conducted on his own principles. The *World* had just been started with very promising success.

The forecast was creditable to his tact and sagacity ; for I confess that, with many others, I had misgivings, and thought this scheme of 'a Society paper' was not a promising one. It, however, grew in favour, is now an assured, firmly established property, above all vicissitudes of changes of taste, and brings in a very fine income. One may congratulate an old friend on this unusually successful issue to a laborious life. Not only has his own venture been successful, but he has brought success to shoals of imitators. He has created a taste for this special form of treatment, which has become all but indispensable. It is, of course, another question whether it has been beneficial to the general taste.

Like Dickens himself, Yates has always been a 'personality.' He to some extent illlustrates a favourite theory of mine, that force of character, with a power of impressing others, is about the chief element in getting a literary man forward, and is almost more potent than talent. It is necessary for a writer to interest the public as a man, apart from his writings. In the case of Yates, his marked character attracts no less than his career, which has been an interesting one.

To him was allotted a particularly interesting class of subjects connected with the workings of London life, and the general mechanism of that life. No one could better investigate, say, all the arrangements for providing horses in London—omnibus, cab, or 'job'—which he minutely inquired into and gathered up into the shape of 'Riding London.' Derby days, great pugilistic contests, curious Post-Office incidents and trials, discovered in the course of some professional searches, all were worked up into effective essays.*

Later, he began to write novels, and, as I well remember, his stories were in fashionable demand, being smart, and racy of London life and character. There were quite a number of these, such as 'Black Sheep' and 'Land at Last,' which passed through the journal. Some of his stories were translated into French. But for the success of the *World*, he would no doubt have developed his novel-writing on a greater scale.

In considering Dickens's character, due account should be taken of his *penchant* for the stage and all that was connected with it. It was bound up with his thoughts. He was a dramatist himself, and besides his own early pieces he had a slight share in 'No Thoroughfare,' and possibly in 'The Frozen Deep.' But it was curious to note that nearly all his 'followers' were more or less connected with the stage, by sympathy, or from having written for the stage or upon the stage. Wilkie Collins, Yates, Sala, Andrew Halliday, Moy Thomas, John Hollingshead, Charles Reade, Dutton Cook and Morley (who were both critics), Lord Lytton, Henry Spicer, Godfrey Turner, and myself, all wrote for the stage. Spicer, whose name is not very familiar as a dramatist, was the author of a vast number of pieces, all popular and of a particular class. Halliday was in extraordinary demand, and had great success. Hollingshead wrote one of the most amusing farces in the *répertoire*, 'The Birthplace of Podgers,' still one of Toole's most acceptable and effective parts.

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* These were collected and published in two agreeable volumes, 'The Business of Pleasure,' a well-chosen title that exactly expresses the subject.

Dramatic instinct is in truth a valuable aid to periodical writing. It supplies a present *vividness* of treatment, gets rid of verbiage, and teaches the importance of dealing with what is strictly essential. It effaces the person of the narrator, and makes the events themselves tell the story.

Newspaper training, too, is also of much value, for the writer comes to his work already familiar with the handling of words and all the mechanical devices of writing. The ordinary contributor has to learn these as he writes.

Amid the flood of personal memoirs and recollections which are now in fashion, those of Edmund Yates seem to me the most vivacious, spirited, and entertaining. They are written in an unaffected, natural style; they are the work of a man who has seen a great deal of life, and of one of keen observation. His relations with Dickens were always of the most pleasant kind. The novelist had a real regard and affection for him. The same topics, the same fashions of life, were enjoyed by both. He describes in the most agreeable way his introduction to Dickens in 1854, which he sought not with a view to writing for *Household Words*, and which he modestly says he then considered was above his standard. However, he very soon obtained a conspicuous position there.*

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* One or two of his agreeable papers have actually been ascribed to Dickens; and I confess to having been always under the impression that 'Pincher Astray,' an amusing, sympathetic 'dog-paper,' was Dickens's work, until I read Yates's announcement to the contrary. Since the above was written, I

He himself has told very fully the curious story of the unlucky dispute with Thackeray and the Garrick Club. I have before me at this moment the original little article in *Town Talk* which produced this storm. It must be confessed that Thackeray's behaviour in this matter seemed to have been rather passionate. Thackeray himself had used very strong language, and stigmatized the article as 'not offensive and unfriendly merely, but slanderous and untrue,' and requesting the other 'henceforth to forego discussions, however blundering, upon his private affairs.' 'I may assume it to be clear,' said Yates with justice, 'that this letter is intentionally arrogant and offensive.' As is well known, the cold repelling of Dickens's proffered mediation led to an estrangement between the two novelists, who were only reconciled 'behind the coats at the Athenæum' a short time before Thackeray's death. Not often does that prosaic quarter witness so touching a scene!

It is likely, however, that other causes helped to bring about this unlucky difference. When

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have had the melancholy duty of attending the funeral of this brilliant friend. He died on May 20, almost in the theatre, and with a suddenness that recalls the death of Dickens.

Thackeray rose suddenly into fame, Dickens was supreme. But friends of the new writer began to claim for him almost at once not merely a division of fame, but that Thackeray was the greater writer of the two. They urged that in most points he was superior. Dickens, with his sensitive nature, while willing to accept the new writer, and share reputation with him, naturally resented this hostile tone of partisans, and was, as it were, thrown on the defensive. Something very like this occurred in the case of Irving and Salvini, when, the same sort of claim being put forward on behalf of the Italian player, the English actor found himself in the awkward position of having to receive with the most cordial welcome one who was pressed as a claimant to his throne.

It might be said that there is but one fixed *quantity* of reputation. One man may be enjoying the *whole ;* when another star rises, *his* reputation must be taken from the existing star. It required, therefore, the greatest tact and judiciousness to carry off such a situation. Friends of Dickens and Thackeray will judge whether what I say is the true view or not, and in my own limited way I could see that there was always a reserve on the side of Dickens, as though he felt that he had not been handsomely treated. Where he found that his generous advances were met by self-assertion and distrust, he was thrown back on his sensitive self, and could with difficulty bring himself to simulate cordiality. So it was in his relations with Thackeray.

Dickens was destined to have a further disagreeable association with the Garrick Club. His friend and editor, Wills, was put up for election and rejected. Dickens was much hurt at this treatment, and he, with Wilkie Collins, retired from the club. This was thought to be an exhibition of over-sensitiveness ; but as the election was in the hands of a committee, it had a more personal air than might be supposed, Wills being known to be so intimately connected with him. The truth was, the Garrick was at that time filled with Thackeray's companions and admirers.

As for actual comparison between Thackeray and Dickens, from a literary or social point of view, it is scarcely to be considered. Dickens's sphere was infinitely larger ; he seemed to touch universal chords. Thackeray's domain was limited in comparison. The general popular knowledge of Dickens and of his expressions, allusions, etc., was perfectly extraordinary, and still endures; whereas Thackeray has furnished no contributions of this kind beyond the figure of 'Becky Sharp,' who is known everywhere. The present sale of Thackeray's works amounts to a bagatelle in comparison with the enormous and increasing sale of Dickens's.

No doubt Thackeray was warmly appreciated by those who knew him intimately, and who were earnest in protesting as to the tenderness of his heart and the like; but if we compare their characters, and read Dickens's life and the vast number of his letters, what strikes us is his restless, almost ceaseless, attempts to do something for somebody; to furnish pleasure and supply amusement, as though he himself found pleasure and amusement in so doing. In Thackeray's letters, on the contrary, we find abundance of jests, and of amiable sarcasms and shrewd comments; but there is little of the genial spontaneity of the other.

Mr. Fields, an American, who knew both authors, and loved both, has written an impartial account of each, and it is really curious to contrast them. Each was kind and friendly to him; and he, in his turn, bore them a real affection.

Yet, as exhibited in his two accounts, nothing is more striking than the contrast between the pair—between the exuberant, generous, active thoughtfulness of Dickens, his complete unselfishness, his wish to make his friend happy, and the sort of reserved personal view taken by Thackeray under all conditions. Even in the matter of the readings given by both in America, there is found the same striking contrast. Thus, we all know the thorough, conscientious fashion in which Dickens carried out his duty to the public; how again and again, when worn down by the hardships of the climate, and general exhaustion and harassing catarrh, he would gallantly 'pull himself together' and face the audience at all risks. He may, indeed, be said to have sacrificed his life to this sense of duty. But if we turn to Thackeray, we find Mr. Fields making this simple statement: 'He was to have visited various cities in the Middle and Western States; but he took up a newspaper one night before retiring, saw a steamer advertised to sail the next morning for England, was seized with a sudden fit of homesickness, rang the bell for his servant, who packed up his luggage that night, and the next day he sailed. The first intimation I had of his departure was a card which he sent by the pilot of the steamer: "Good-bye, Fields; good-bye, Mrs. Fields; God bless everybody, says W. M. T."'

In this cavalier style he parted from the friend who had done so much for him. Yet he had announced that his object in going to America was to earn a provision for his daughters. Most of the anecdotes given by his friend show the same carelessness as to the feelings of others. We are told how he invited a large company to a Greenwich dinner, and kept them waiting over an hour. At last he arrived without having changed his dress, and announced: 'Thank heaven, the last sheet of the "Virginians" has gone to the printer!' That, he thought, was sufficient excuse. 'He made no apology, introduced nobody, and begged us all to be seated as quickly as possible.' I venture to say that not a single one of these traits, save the giving the dinner, is conceivable in the case of Dickens. Dickens, moreover, was exceedingly modest about his own productions and successes, never claiming his friends' approbation or admiration, though he was glad, in a quiet way, to let them see his work and have their appreciation. Whereas

Thackeray, on the contrary, could not conceal his delight at any 'hit' of his own. He uproariously shouted and danced when he heard of the great sale of his tickets in America, and on his way to the lecture hall 'insisted on thrusting both his long legs out of the carriage window in deference to his magnanimous ticket-holders.'

There was a sort of want of respect in this, or contempt even, for those who had patronized him. He showed it further by not getting ready for his lecture in time, saying 'he would try and be ready at eight,' though the lecture was announced for half-past seven. At a quarter-past he was found making a drawing for a lady, not dressed, not shaved, and vowed he would not 'budge an inch in the direction of the d——d lecture hall before he finished it.' And this to an American!

Mr. Fields also describes a scene where they were both invited to attend a friendly club of a scientific sort, and where a dull old gentleman rose to make a discourse: 'My distress may be imagined when he got up quite deliberately from the prominent place where a chair had been set for him, and made his exit into a small ante-room.

There he indulged in all sorts of antics, stabbing an imaginary person on the floor, and this not altogether out of the view of the company.' Again it would be impossible to imagine Dickens doing such a thing.

Nor do we find in his editing of his magazine and treatment of his contributors anything to compare with the painstaking, sympathetic treatment accorded by Dickens to his writers. His letters were formal and unattractive. Here is an editorial letter, rather dry in tone:

'SIR,

'The "Law of Courtship" promises well, but you ought to be more than titularly competent, and get real sound law at your back on subjects so exceedingly delicate and, it must be said, interesting.

'Your very faithful servant,

'W. M. THACKERAY.'

He speedily came to consider editing a burden, and though he was receiving a princely salary, he very soon tired of the thing. Indeed, in his later work, he began to exhibit this repugnance to writing, 'growing sick of his task' before he got to the end. This is shown in his ‘Philip’ and ‘Lovell the Widower.’ He looked on his labours as a useful means of making money. He certainly lacked the conscientious feeling of Dickens, that the public were entitled to the best he could turn out, at any cost of pains and labour. Nor would Dickens have rushed in to announce to a mixed audience: ‘Thank heaven, the last sheet has gone to the printer!’ That ‘last sheet’ would have been kept by him for days, to be read and re-read.

CHAPTER V.

LORD LYTTON—CHARLES READE—CHARLES LEVER—MOY THOMAS, ETC.

Through all his long career Dickens maintained his warm and affectionate intimacy with another gifted man, who was not only a novelist of extraordinary power and popularity like himself, but poet, statesman, orator, diplomatist, and dramatist. This was Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, whom he had known since the old Macready days, and during their early struggles. Through many vicissitudes they had risen together to fame, and their mutual liking and esteem had never been interrupted. Like Dickens, Bulwer to his death retained his popularity, and it is to be noted as a proof of extraordinary natural ability and genius that towards the close of his career he could take an entirely new departure in fiction, and by his remarkable story of 'The Caxtons,' written somewhat after Sterne's methods, excite fresh interest and admiration.*

It is always strange to think that he is literally the only dramatist of the century whose works keep the stage, as it is called. The ever-attractive 'Lady of Lyons' and the pleasant 'Money' not only 'keep the stage,' but are as well received as ever. His 'Richelieu,' also, is occasionally revived, and would be found no less enduring were there more actors capable of dealing with the rather tempestuous Cardinal. Indeed, most of his pieces may be seen with pleasure, and 'La Vallière,' 'The Sea Captain,' and the posthumous 'House of Darnley' have a potent charm.

Bulwer Lytton was certainly a 'charming man,' tranquil, almost Eastern, in manner, talking in a dreamy way. He had elegant tastes, and took an eager interest in all the literature of his time, in the new as well as in the old.†

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* The name of one of his stories, 'What will he do with it?' was suggested by Dickens. Numbers of writers owe the happy titles of their works to him.

† I may be pardoned for introducing, by way of an illustration, his too flattering appreciation of one of my own humble attempts. In one of Dickens's letters we find: 'Fitzgerald will be so proud of your opinion of his "Mrs. Tillotson," and will, I know, derive such great encouragement from it, that I have faithfully quoted it word for word, and sent it to him in

I remember once calling at his house in Grosvenor Square—one of the many in which he established himself, for he had a fancy for thus changing his residences. His grave, deliberate, 'finished' manner made a deep impression on me. His air and dress, the tones of his voice, seemed to favour this association with the East, which, perhaps, he sought to suggest. Later I met him on the delightful 'Guild day' at Knebworth, where I recall glimpses of him in various portions of his ancestral halls, surrounded by a motley crowd, but where he maintained the same tranquil, passive bearing, as though he were a guest there, and not the host.

His domestic troubles were long public property. Everyone knew the story of the strange, erratic lady, the once beautiful Rosina Wheeler, who was his wife. In the old days of warm youth and admiration he had sung her charms in a little poem, now scarce enough, on an Irish theme.*

Ireland.' And how kindly was it of Dickens to take this trouble! Naturally, the author of the story in question felt not a little proud of this encouragement from two such men.

* I recall, when a boy, being constantly at an old Irish mansion not many miles from Dublin, where lived a worthy excellent pair, who had given her shelter for a year and more

I recall an interesting night some years ago, much looked forward to, when it was fondly hoped that a fresh dramatic wreath would crown the temples of the deceased dramatist. Since his death his son, with unwearied devotion, had sought to get a hearing for the dramas, poetical and others, which had long lain in his drawers. Some of these had been read by managers and men of letters, and a sort of formal praise 'of esteem,' as it were, had been given. I had read some of them myself, but they appeared to me uninteresting and quite undramatic. The impression left was that it was difficult to credit that they could have been the work of the author of 'Richelieu.' Forster one night, as a sort of treat, volunteered to read aloud the 'Walpole,' which

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in her troubles. The host was a benevolent man, but a little eccentric, and had a garden laid out in inscriptions wrought in box, such as 'Reform,' 'Victoria,' 'Melbourne,' texts on which he expounded at enormous length. People who went forth to admire flowers—to 'see his garden,' in short—found themselves thus entrapped into long trains of political reminiscences. All his political divinities, however, invariably 'showed the cloven hoof'—his favourite phrase—or were 'Algerines.' 'Oh, the Algerines!' was usually the concluding burst. His friends were equally amused and astonished to find this excellent pair introduced, 'Algerines' and all, into 'The Bubble Family,' a novel by their late guest.

was in tripping hexameters, and rhymed. It proved ineffective, and the reader, seeing that no enthusiasm was roused by the allusions to 'my Lord of Bath,' and other personages, good-humouredly gave over his task with a comic rebuke to his hearers' lack of taste.

The late Earl of Lytton at last prevailed on Mr. Wilson Barrett, then lessee of the Princess's Theatre, to bring forward a serious tragedy—one of these posthumous works—called 'Brutus; or, The Fall of the Gods.' The night was an exciting one, for there in the stalls was seated the family of the dramatist—his son, his grandchildren—who were eager to witness the triumph of their illustrious relative. It was pleasant, too, to see the great writer's old friend, Elwin, drawn from his retirement at Norwich, and found, perhaps for the first time in a generation, within the garish walls of a theatre. There was something pathetic in this devotion, and something more sad in the rather disastrous issue of the night.

This gifted man, the late Ambassador at Paris, interesting in his way, I knew much better, having enjoyed his hospitality both at Knebworth and at his house in Paris when he was secretary to the Embassy there. In all the glitter of his course, his Governorship of India, and Embassies at various Courts, he retained the greatest interest and delight in the ordinary prosaic incidents of literary *mechanism*, was eager to know the literary man, whatever his pretensions, and followed the incidents of the ordinary work-a-day world of letters.

He was a genuine *author*, and always happy when he was writing. He may be said to have died writing. In the same spirit, it was pleasant to see him at one of the suppers given by Mr. Irving, surrounded by the busy men of the press, critics, and others, whom he was glad to meet, and some of whom I introduced to him. Not long before his death I had from him a letter on a subject in which we were both always interested — his father's ever-popular 'Lady of Lyons':

'The story of the bellows-mender is to be found in Williams' "Sketches of Manners and Opinions in the French Republic," that work in two volumes being a series of letters written towards the close of the eighteenth century by Helen Maria Williams.

'I believe that the book is a rather rare one, but possibly the London Library may possess a copy of it. I have one myself, which I value very much, because it was given to me by Mary Anderson, and I should be very sorry to lose it. Should you care to see it, however, I can send it to you, if you will tell me to what address it may be directed without risk of going astray, and promise to return it to me when you have done with it.'

In what a pleasant vein he could play with a subject will be seen from the following, addressed to me on the subject of a letter that had been overlooked :

'Under that homely but useful piece of furniture which stands by my bedside I found this morning, by the merest chance, the corner of an envelope peeping as coyly as a first snowdrop. This, when picked up and examined, proved to be an unopened letter from you, bearing no date, but written, I fear, some weeks ago, as it refers to my being at Buxton. I am more shocked than I can say at the unmerited and undesigned oblivion from which chance has rescued it.

'My letters by the first of the two daily posts which keep Knebworth in communication with the rest of the world are always brought to me in bed, and I can only suppose that I must have been half asleep when I turned over the budget of letters which came with this one, that it fell upon the floor without my noticing it, and has till this morning remained where it fell without being noticed by the housemaid. Not very creditable to the conscientiousness with which she discharges her lowly duties. But perhaps if she had noticed it she might have thrown it into the fire, in which case her want of intelligence would have been more disastrous than her want of observation, which has cost her a severe lecture from me. However, for the future, as the old lady said when she heard that Maurice was preaching the doctrine of universal salvation, "let us hope better things of her."

'I lose not a moment in offering you this regretful and distressful explanation of my involuntary delay in assuring you that I shall feel extremely flattered by the dedication of your new book, and that I gratefully thank you for the kind and friendly offer of it.'

And again: 'I have never heard of "Puck's Tale; or, The Love of a Spirit," and I am greatly interested in your discovery. Could you obtain for me the book, or the loan of the book, in which you have found it? My father, when at college, wrote and dedicated to Lord Holland a tale in verse called "The Loves of a Sylphide," but it cannot be the same as the one you mention. Our evening with you was to us a very pleasant one, and my recollection is still full of the many most interesting objects I saw at your house. I hope you were not frozen on your way home from the theatre. What cruel weather!'

Another of this circle was Charles Reade, a most interesting man, surprisingly simple in his talk, though when 'possessed' by a favourite subject he became ever so little of a 'bore.'

Once, at a dinner at Forster's, he arrived very full of one topic, which he was busy converting into a romance. This was the story of the Annesley peerage, which in his hands became 'The Wandering Heir,' and later a play. He could talk of nothing else, and all through the dinner gave us long abstracts from the evidence taken at the trial. He seemed to have the old volume containing the report by heart almost. His two neighbours were the most afflicted in this way, for our host, an admirable disperser of inopportune talk, made the conversation as general as he could.

He had extravagant, far-fetched notions of merit in individuals, which were not shared by others. When he undertook management, disastrously enough, for the purpose of bringing out his own pieces, he enlisted a strange motley corps, drawing its members chiefly from obscure theatres in the country, on account of their supposed amazing but unacknowledged gifts. A more provincial gathering, it seemed to me, could not be imagined.

I remember that in a note in his bill he implored the public attention to a selection of old English tunes, such as 'The Roast Beef,' 'The Keeper's Daughter,' and others as familiar, and which he said had been 'admirably arranged by Mr. Spillane, the leader of the band,' and which, exquisitely played, were to give great delight to the audience.

I never met anyone with such a taste for hobbies, or, as they might now be called, 'fads.' He took up innumerable things with equal enthusiasm. Many writers require this stimulant, without which they can do nothing with effect. The most curious of his fancies was as unexpected as it was curious, viz., his sudden ardour for old violins, and for a time he wrote with extraordinary learning and research on 'Strads,' Guarneriuses, and Amatis, with all the conviction of a skilled performer.

His last days were clouded by painful illness. He became 'serious,' and retired to Shepherd's Bush, where he lived solitary and unheard of. Sometimes he strayed into the Garrick Club, where I once met him, and asked him to dine, when he answered sadly, 'You ask a man to dine that cannot eat and has no stomach!'

He usually wrote on curiously-shaped scraps, very long and narrow. I have many of them by me. Not long before his death he sent me the following: 'I am staying here' (62, Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush) 'at present, and, owing to bad health, my visits to Knightsbridge are short and uncertain. Fog is death to me. I will put your letter aside to write when the weather changes. You cannot get "Masks and Faces" in the Strand. It is out of print. I will try and get you a copy from a friend,' etc.

Later we find a novelist of mark and popularity introduced into Dickens's journal, to the increase of its gaiety, the buoyant Charles Lever. This brilliant story-teller, who had a good deal of the vivacity of Dumas, was almost unique in his gift of relating adventures with fun and frolic ; in fact, 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Pickwick' might be considered the two most spirited stories of our time ; they never flag for a moment. This offers a contrast to the works of the present day, where the writers seem constantly to relax, and fail in sustaining the spirit of vivacity. This may be accounted for by the fact that both works appeared in serial form, which requires for success that the interest and attention should be kept up in each instalment.

Lever was, of course, a writer not to be compared with Dickens ; there was a rather theatrical tone in his work ; but he was, at least, sincere, and seemed to believe thoroughly in his characters. I met him on several occasions, once at dinner, where, to my surprise, I found him to be rather grave and sober, and by no means overflowing with good stories, as I had expected. In one point he resembled Dickens, in abandoning the vein of broad humour as he advanced in years. He seemed to 'range' himself, as it were.

I remember the general enjoyment with which the first instalment of his *All the Year Round* story, 'A Day's Ride, a Life's Romance,' inspired everyone. Wills was exuberant, and loud in his praises of the opening chapters. Indeed, it was a most stirring and original thing, full of promise of diverting episodes. The hero, it may be remembered, had gone forth for a simple ride, and had by some chance taken a bag belonging to a diplomatist in mistake for his own, thus becoming involved, in spite of himself, in all sorts of droll adventures. Dickens, too, heartily enjoyed the imbroglio. But later on the writer relaxed, or grew tired of his work ; he seemed to have no more to say, or was laboriously developing a serious German episode, with little coherence and no spirit or fun. At last the thing began to 'stagger,' and had to be abruptly, as I think, brought to a close. An editor is always at the mercy of his writer when he accepts an unfinished story, for the author has an irresistible temptation to 'take things easily,' or trust to the inspiration of the future. He is secure in any case.

A safe and well-grounded writer is my old friend Moy Thomas, a man deeply skilled in all the lore of the last century. He could tell of

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose life he had written, with many new and curious details. His articles, always interesting, were packed with facts, and he could be always depended on for accuracy. For many years he has been the dramatic critic of the *Daily News*, and every Monday morning we welcomed his entertaining *causerie* on theatrical matters. His criticisms were always eminently judicious, fair, and instructive, tinged occasionally with a pleasant, but never ill-natured sarcasm.

It is curious to think of the chequered careers of those who have been associated with the two journals. Hollingshead was long known as a man of 'hard' facts and figures, deep in the mysteries of finance, with a gift of imparting to this impracticable subject a popular attractive air. One article of his, 'The City of Unlimited Paper' or 'Give us more Room,' I forget which, was one morning copied entire in the *Times*, then, as it would be now, a most unusual form of compliment.*

He was, however, presently beguiled away into management, and founded the well-known Gaiety Theatre, which he directed for many years, introducing and developing a peculiar form of burlesque entertainment based on French models. He used pleasantly to boast that 'he had kept the sacred lamp of burlesque burning.'

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* To show the importance attached to everything that appeared under Dickens's auspices, I may mention here that portions of some articles of my own, descriptive of Roman life, used to be regularly copied, week by week, into the same journal.

James Payn, now editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, was in those days beginning to attract attention as a 'sensation novelist.' I remember him on the 'Guild day' among the crowd at Knebworth. He had not then, I think, joined the *Household Words* coterie, but on our night journey back to town Dickens spoke of him with admiration, particularly praising a novel of his then much read, 'Lost Sir Massingberd.' He was presently contributing stories to the journal.

Some eight or ten years ago his novels were in great vogue and deservedly relished, but for some reason he does not now supply them so frequently as formerly. The first two or three columns of the *Illustrated London News* are every week filled by him with an agreeable *causerie*, 'Notes of the Day,' which used formerly to be supplied by Sala. Payn's are 'actualities' of the time, Sala's having been more in the nature of antiquarian 'curios,' which displayed his rare knowledge and multifarious reading.

Andrew Halliday was a genuine Scot, talking with a racy accent, 'tallish' and black-bearded. He was a versatile man enough, could 'knock off' story, novel, or essay ; and one of his most dashing feats was, as I have said, his ready completion of the interrupted story, 'Quite Alone,' which he undertook with a light heart, and finished to the satisfaction of every one concerned, save, perhaps, that of the author himself.

At one time he had all but a monopoly of the dramatic market, and his dramas, which were of a safe and sound kind, showing a thorough knowledge of his craft, were in great demand. He had a special gift for arranging Walter Scott's novels for the stage ; for laying them out on a large broad scale, with spectacular effects, such as suited the scene of Drury Lane. Of these things he was the assiduous and abundant caterer, working for the now forgotten Chatterton, then thought to be a sort of 'Napoleon of managers.'

This speculator, it must be said, made a sort of *trade* of his craft, getting all kinds of theatres into his hands, and 'working up' the refreshment bars, bills, cloak-rooms, into sources of profit. The dramas were in keeping; 'Amy Robsart,' 'The Great City,' and many other pieces of this class, were some of Halliday's most ambitious efforts. They brought money. Some of his more trifling efforts, small comedies, produced, I think, at the Royalty or the Olympic, had far more merit. They were very agreeable and amusing, and acted with much spirit by Miss Oliver and Vernon. His arrangement from 'Copperfield'—'Little Em'ly'—was an excellent piece, though it owed much to the admirable performance of Micawber by Mr. Rowe and of Peggotty by Sam Emery. These players seemed to me to exactly conceive the author's intentions. Micawber was almost perfect. With some difficulty Dickens was induced to go and see it, for he disliked witnessing what were often travesties of his characters, and, I believe, professed himself fairly satisfied.

I remember meeting Halliday at Christie's during the sale of Dickens's effects and relics, when he showed me with much triumph one of the Pickwick silver punch-ladles, which he had secured for some twenty odd pounds. He was presently surrounded by admiring friends, receiving compliments on his trophy. That was really a strange scene of excitement, and even madness, for the prices so frantically offered were certainly far beyond the value of the articles, making the fullest allowance for their interest as relics of the much-admired departed humorist. As it proved, it was the mere spasm of the moment; for after an interval, when some of the objects came into the market again, they sank to far more rational prices. The owners 'got out' at a heavy loss.* The scene was a characteristic one. No true Dickensian should have missed it. For every 'lot' there was a keen, impassioned struggle, while my friend, John Forster, seated next the auctioneer, in his capacity of executor, pencil in hand, surveyed the contending host with a placid smile.

A very valuable and useful writer in the two journals, on subjects of a practical kind, was Parkinson, a cheery, energetic man, of good sense and business capacity. He was highly popular with his friends. As his editor wrote to him : ‘You know very well that I have invariably offered you those subjects of political and social interest to write upon, in which integrity, exactness, a remarkable power of generalizing evidence and balancing facts, and a special clearness in stating the case, were indispensable on the part of the writer. My confidence in your powers has never been misplaced, and through all our literary intercourse you have never been hasty or wrong. Whatever trust you have undertaken has been so completely discharged that it has become my habit to read your proofs rather for my own edification than (as in other cases) for the detection of mere slips here and there, or the more pithy presentation of the subject.’

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* Dickens's original MSS. of his printed works have steadily increased in price, and the few that have come into the market, such as those of his Christmas books, have brought enormous prices. The MS. of 'The Christmas Carol' has even been reproduced in facsimile.

This was a handsome testimonial, sincere, and withal well deserved. Parkinson was at the time —1868—in a public office, and he was anxious to obtain a Commissionership of Inland Revenue. He has since laid aside periodical writing, and devoted himself to more stirring occupations. Some time ago he received the gratifying tribute of a dinner spontaneously offered to him by a troop of friends. At one of these strange miscellaneous banquets—given by the Lord Mayor of the time being to 'literature and art,' so called —I was delighted to find myself beside my old friend and colleague, looking, as they say, 'not a day older,' when we called up all the spirits of the past, with the ghost of the genial Dickens, whom we had both known so well.

Yet another of the contributors was that once notable musical critic, Henry Chorley. As was the case with nearly all the leading writers, he was a personal friend of the editor's. It was often Dickens's fate that an introduction, or actual friendship or acquaintanceship, in most instances, led to an offer of contributions, a rather embarrassing and troublesome tax to pay for such connections. For thus was entailed the trouble of reading, of writing letters it may be of refusal, always a delicate matter, but which he discharged with admirable tact and unwearied patience. Nothing is more astonishing, indeed, than the pains he took to explain at length to some friend or slight acquaintance, and would-be contributor the reasons why his paper was found unsuitable.

One night in the old times, going down to Dover to cross over to Ostend, I found that it was blowing so hard I could hardly keep my feet. There was then an exposed walk from the station down to the miserable pier in the sort of dock where the small vessel lay, and the prospect of the night was uninviting enough. The passage was stormy and utterly miserable ; there were not more than two or three passengers, the rest having sought the friendly shelter of the Lord Warden. About five o'clock on a dark, wretched morning we reached Ostend, and were duly entombed in a ponderous yellow omnibus to be clattered off to the station. This rude vehicle—a strange contrast to those that now await the traveller —was of the pattern then found in most towns.

We went on jolting and bumping over the stones ; then rumbled over the drawbridge, under the narrow archway which led into the town. Ostend was at that time a shabby, decaying place, surrounded by yellow, rude, besmirched walls and stagnant, ill-smelling ditches. I dwell on these details, because they supply a picture long since faded away—that dark morning, the old sleeping town, and the two travellers, sole tenants of the unwieldy 'bus. My companion, an agreeable, sympathetic man, talked pleasantly of the passage. He was an old, experienced traveller, and spoke complacently of 'going to Fontaine's'

—the hotel—where he intended to have 'a good snug sleep,' and then pursue his journey later in the day. I had, alas! to go forward. Passing through more narrow streets and jolting round abrupt corners, we halted before a fair building of many windows, with an archway and a tempting courtyard full of flowers; and here, after wishing me *bon voyage*, my companion was set down and disappeared.

Some years later I was introduced to a guest at Gadshill, and at once recognised my omnibus companion of that dismal morning. He recalled it too. This was Henry F. Chorley, a short, wiry-looking man, who, with his gray bristly hair, somewhat reminded one of Victor Hugo. He had a rather squeaky voice, with a curious half-suspicious, half-reserved manner. His musical criticisms in the *Athenæum*, which were sharp enough, and perhaps coloured by prejudices and personal feeling, brought him many enemies. He had a fancy, however, for making a figure in periodical writing, and once elaborated some odd papers for *Household Words*—one on the subject of 'The Area Sneak,' in which he himself saw extraordinary power and merit. The editor, however, as I well recollect, could not 'make head or tail of it,' or discover what the author would be at. He, however, good-naturedly yielded to the pressure, and inserted it. Chorley also wrote a novel or two. Many writers have this odd view of their own productions, and often see extraordinary point and merit in some poor screed of their own, but which has an almost bewildering effect on others, who yet feel a curiosity to know what could have prompted them to write such a thing. Such was that strange bit of incoherent adventure once issued in the *Cornhill Magazine*, by Anthony Trollope, called 'Brown, Jones, and Robinson,' or some such title, and which excited this perplexity in the minds of all.

Some time after, I reminded him of this meeting at Gadshill, wishing for his opinion on some little piece of music I had written. The supposed crusty man and critic wrote thus:

'I should have answered yours earlier had I not been disabled by illness and domestic trouble, so as hardly to be fit for the requirements of the day. You had no need to remind me of our pleasant dinner at "our mutual friend's," because I am your debtor for much pleasure, and am only too glad to pay my peppercorn rent in return. My name (as one of your country-women said, when she was asked for a song) "is not worth refusing," and so I feel doubly the compliment of its being asked for. I think, had I been you, I would have taken another prelude. That music by Bach is endless in its amount of suggestion. Moscheles has made several most capital "glosses"; and seeing that the original work remains intact, being printed, I have never been able to lend myself to the cant about "desecration," the case being generally one of variation in somewhat of a new form. Palestrina wrote a mass on the melody of "L'Homme Armé." Pray, when you come to town, look me up. I am always at home till 2 p.m.'

There is an agreeable flavour about this, to say nothing of the pleasant scraps of musical information. Who would think that this was the soured, carping Chorley?

Chorley professed a sort of devoted attachment to Dickens and his family, a devotion which he proved in a very substantial way by leaving an annuity to his friend's eldest daughter. He lived in a 'smallish' comfortable house, close to Chesham Place, where he gave very pleasant little dinners. One of these is associated with a not undramatic passage in my own story.

Many years ago, when I first came to town, I was busy fighting the battle of life with such energy and resources as I could muster; and what is more hopeless and despairing than the literary struggles of the stranger in the Great City? The note of such struggles is, perhaps, slowness of progress. Save in rare instances, you must, as it is called, 'make your way'; and it is a very long way, as I shall show further on. The essential gifts to ensure success seem to be connected with character rather than with talent. One night, in a very desponding mood, I had wandered into the Adelphi Theatre, where a sympathetic romantic drama was being performed —'Notre Dame'—in which Mr. Fernandes presented what always seemed to me to be a most picturesque creation, that of the Monk. The poetical scenes passed dreamily before me—Old Paris, the Cathedral, the antique streets. It seemed all 'in key,' as it were, and had a soothing effect. Between the acts I remember being struck by the spectacle of a servant being introduced into the stalls by one of the attendants. He looked carefully, searching for his master; took stock also of the dress circle, but could not discover what he wanted: then went his way with the other.

I surveyed this rather unusual incident, but it is curious that it never occurred to me that this was my own servant, though he seemed to resemble him. The improbability of such a visit actually enfeebled the evidence of the senses. When I got home I found telegrams—'Must start next morning,' etc. A near and dear relation was at the point of death. He died, in fact, the next day. And this entirely changed my position in life. The tale of toil and struggle came to an end; there was ease and comfort before me.

There was something dramatic in that scene in the Adelphi, and I often look back to the mystical scenes that passed that night. It seems a dream; but no scene could be so effective and confounding as the change that awaited me at home.

But all this is by the way; though it is connected with Chorley, and serves to introduce him again. The author, too, of 'Notre Dame' was my friend Halliday. It is thus curious that in the literary life you are always moving among familiar figures. You see a piece, and you know the author, the actors, managers, critics too. This lends a spirit and vitality to what with others is an isolated function. They are strangers, while you are at home.

When I set off at about six o'clock next morning, I remembered that I was to dine with Chorley that very day, and left a note of excuse on my desk. But it was somehow overlooked. Now, this was quite enough to spoil or dislocate his little party, the performers in which were jealously and nicely selected. He would be no doubt waiting, delaying, expecting at least some excuse; but no, the vacant place remained, and no excuse came to him at all till long after. I fully expected that he would never forgive this; it was touching him in the sorest point. However, six weeks later, by which time I had discovered the neglect, I sent him a penitent letter, when, to my surprise, this reached me:

'*May* 7, 1871.

'Miss H., who dined here this day week, gave me the sad news of what had deprived me of the pleasure of seeing you. It was merely a bit of waiting, with many regrets on my part to have missed you for such a cause. I have known too much trouble and sudden surprise not to know how these things destroy every little arrangement one may have made. Presently, when I get back to my normal point of no-strength, I shall try again; and if trouble there be subsequently, I think it should be on the side of

'Yours sincerely,
'H. F. C.'

I see him now, with his curious head and short grizzly hair, his rather 'squeaky' voice. He seemed to be shy, which was strange for a man who held a position of authority. When he was with Dickens he seemed full of awe, whispered low, and kept in the background.

Another of Dickens's most ardent admirers, and even worshippers, was Charles Kent, a graceful poet and clever general writer. He illustrates in his course the multifarious things that the hard-working 'literary man' has to do. He was long editor and proprietor of the old *Sun* newspaper. He has edited Lamb, Moore, and other writers. Admirers of the former owe to him two curious contributions to Elia's biography, viz., the Temple registry of his children's baptisms, and an account of his interview with the once brilliant Fanny Kelly, the heroine of 'Barbara S——.' He is eke a poet, and a graceful one, too. His greeting to Longfellow in the *Times* will be recalled by many. For Dickens he had, as I said, a sort of affectionate worship, and he it was who organized the great farewell dinner when the novelist went to America. It was to Charles Kent also that Dickens wrote his last letter, making an appointment, destined, alas! never to be kept.

Indeed, few men have known so many remarkable literary men as Charles Kent. I have always admired, and envied too, his sanguine, buoyant temperament. He has often suggested to me what his friend Leigh Hunt must have been, in his enthusiastic views of life. Yet he has had much to try this hopeful temperament. He was, of course, one of the old *Household Words* set, and in its columns will be found many of his agreeable papers and versicles. I have heard him relate many curious experiences of Longfellow, Tennyson, Leigh Hunt, Laman Blanchard, George Cruikshank, Albert Smith, R. Horne, Lord Lytton, *e tutti quanti.*

Another agreeable 'link' with the old Dickens days is Marcus Stone, for many years now a Royal Academician. His graceful pencil is specially associated with one of the master's stories, 'Our Mutual Friend,' which he illustrated. It was an amiable trait in Dickens that he delighted in associating with his fame and labours those of his own set, and he must have relished having the assistance of the son of his old friend and fellow-actor, Frank Stone. Sometimes in an inn or seaside lodgings we see framed in sickly maple those once favourite 'plates' — 'The Heart's Misgiving' and the 'Cross Purposes,' which at one time were popular adornments for every proper drawing-room.

It is curious to think that artists such as Millais, Fildes, and others, now famous, were then engaged in illustrating magazine stories, not with very brilliant results. Marcus Stone was a name often heard at Gadshill, where his good spirits and lively talk were ever welcome. He once told me that on a walk with Dickens to Rochester they encountered a tradesman's cart on which was the name 'Weller.' He pointed this out as an odd coincidence. 'Nay,' said the novelist, with his jocund laugh, 'there he is! That is the original!' which will be of interest to true Pickwickians. Marcus Stone has since those days risen to fame and high position in his profession, and still remains the same cordial, cheerful friend he ever was.

Once at a little dinner at Forster's I met Chauncey Hare Townshend, who, I think, had written verses for *Household Words*. It was a pleasant little impromptu affair, the party being only Forster, Dickens, Townshend, and myself. He was one of the quiet 'worshippers' of Dickens—who had, indeed, many such in his train—a tall, thin, delicately made, gentlemanly person, with something of the Quixote in his face, very shy and gentle. He had been a clergyman, I think, but his later 'views' could hardly be considered strictly orthodox. His attachment to Dickens he showed by leaving him a legacy of £1,000; but he also left to his affectionate care the setting in order and preparation for the press of a trunkful of papers, wherein his theological views were embodied. This was a troublesome and awkward bequest, quite foreign to one of Dickens's character and 'ways'; but I could see that, though put out by such an uncongenial task, he was 'tickled' by the grotesqueness of the office thus thrust upon him. I recollect his telling me he could do no more than put the papers in proper order, and fit them for the press, and this he did in his own conscientious fashion. But the author, I fancied, hoped that he would throw himself into the full spirit of the work and 'harmonize' his views.

Almost forgotten now is Peter Cunningham, a mine of lore in regard to the memoirs and personages of the last century, a man who seemed to have Horace Walpole on the brain. He was the first, I think, to introduce the column of literary small talk in the newspaper, and every week this chat of his was read with entertainment in the *Illustrated London News*.

There are many curious things to be found in these agreeable notes — now an old letter of Johnson's, now some scrap about Lady Mary or Nell Gwynne.*

On the 'Guild-day' at Knebworth 'Peter' mysteriously disappeared, and very comic were Dickens's misgivings as to his behaviour on this great occasion. The useful Wills, however, looked carefully after him.

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* These *causeries* have now become a notable feature in every journal. The *Illustrated* has three or four, each on a different subject.

CHAPTER VI.

SHERIDAN LE FANU, ANTHONY TROLLOPE, LORD HOUGHTON, SIR R. QUAIN, ETC.

ANOTHER writer who came to join the ranks of *All the Year Round* in its later days was J. Sheridan Le Fanu. I had some share in introducing him, for he was a most intimate and attached friend of mine. He was, indeed, a very interesting, clever being, having a quaint sense of placid humour, as was to be expected in one who came of the race of the Sheridans. He shrank, however, from society, and was very sensitive. He had a weird fancy, which he displayed in some very powerful stories, notably 'Uncle Silas,' which took the fancy of the town, and which many years after his death was put upon the stage. He was a sort of comrade of Lever's in the old 'Lorrequer' days, when he wrote some stirring novels, illustrated by 'Phiz,' one of which was called 'The Cock and Anchor.' There was also 'The Fortunes of Torlough O'Brien.' 'The House by the Churchyard,' another of these early attempts, he later republished, with a dedication to myself.

There was a curious mixture of principles in him. He was of the old 'true blue' ascendancy party, a sound Protestant, and all but Orange in his views; and yet in his Irish writings there was a tone of violent, picturesque patriotism. His sympathies seemed to be with the natives of the distressful Isle, and his well-known stirring ballad, 'Shamus O'Brien,' which has been recited in every hall of the two hemispheres, might have been written by the most advanced 'Nationalist' of to-day. It is a masterly, dramatic, and picturesque thing.

There was a delightful slyness, as well as originality, in some of his jests. One night we were discussing reviews and criticisms, and I, who had just been enjoying some 'favourable notices,' descanted on the 'utter unimportance' of such things. The philosopher, I urged, ought to care little about them—should accept them tranquilly if they are good, smile contemptuously if they are bad. My friend smiled too, and contended gently that they were of more importance than I would concede. They hurt you or your pride ; for your very particular friends are sure to read, enjoy and perhaps laugh.

A few days later I received a large envelope from him, enclosing a hurried note and a newspaper, into which had been copied a review of my work, taken from a leading London 'weekly,' and of which I had not heard. He wrote in the most kindly way. 'Some enemy,' he said, 'has surely done this ; for there is something so malicious in this unusual step of reprinting a hostile notice in a local paper, that it seems to me almost libellous. Who can you have offended ? Think it over carefully.'

My ears tingled as I read. It was in the most personal and bitter strain, ridicule and every other weapon being used. I rushed to my friend, who showed the most generous sympathy, almost recommending an action for libel. He never knew nor had heard of such a thing before. Nor had I. I felt deeply humiliated, despairing almost. How people would laugh ! 'Well,' he said, 'the only thing is to summon up your philosophy. These things, as you said the other day, do not affect the wise man. You accept them tranquilly if they are good, and smile at them if they are bad. But you don't smile now.' A roguish look in his eyes revealed all. It was a joke! Having some connection with a newspaper, he had had a portion of the type 'lifted' out, and this review written by himself inserted; one copy was taken off, and then the old matter was restored. I forgave him on account of the immense relief the revelation imparted.

His story 'Willing to Die,' placarded on huge posters all over London, furnished Byron with an opening for his wit. It should have run, he said, '*Willing* to Die; or, Bill-Stickers Beware.'

Another instance of his quaint humour. When he was living in the country, a woman who had the run of the kitchen one day stole some silver spoons, then absented herself for a year and more. One day our author met her on the road, when she entered into a voluble defence of herself, bewailing the unjust suspicions with which she was pursued. 'Ah, Masther Joe, why amn't I back there again, as in the ould times? Ah, *them* was the happy days!' 'And why not?' said he, in his gentle way. 'Why shouldn't those happy days return?' 'Ah, d'ye think that, Masther Joe——' 'To be sure I do,' he answered. 'And d'ye mean if I went back——' 'To be sure,' he said. 'It's what I'd do myself.' 'Ah, thin, the blessings of heaven on ye, Masther Joe; I'll do it the first thing to-morrow.' The good woman, who was a notorious character, accordingly presented herself, smiling, like an old acquaintance, and was received with such *empressement* that she was not allowed to depart.

Le Fanu lived in a very retired way in a handsome but rather gloomy mansion in Merrion Square, Dublin. He scarcely ever went out—perhaps never during the closing years of his life. But his house was one richly endowed with associations: for its walls were crowded with interesting portraits, mostly of the Sheridan family—the old Dr. Sheridan, and the actor, Johnson's friend or enemy, the great Brinsley himself, with clever Mrs. Le Fanu, the authoress, and many more. There was a remarkable pastel portrait of Swift, a sort of cameo head, which had belonged to the doctor, and which much attracted Forster on his visit. He had a copy made of it by the late Sir Thomas Jones, President of the Irish Royal Academy. On a rare occasion, such as the visit of his relative, Mrs. Norton, or his old friend Lever, he would give a little entertainment in their honour.

At one time there came to stay with him his niece, a brilliant girl, full of clever talk and shrewd observation. As I lived close by, 'round the corner,' in fact, I would drop in of nights, and many were the pleasant sittings we enjoyed, usually prolonged into the small hours. On one of these nights his niece, who sat listening to the talk, suddenly said, 'Do you know that I also have been writing? If you would not mind, I should like to bring down my story and read you one short chapter—only one.'

She accordingly fetched her work, and read us out with good effect the promised chapter. It was really dramatic—a scene in a church during the service. The judges applauded, possibly after the conventional encouraging fashion: ''Twas very good indeed—very promising.' And good it was; for our modest reader was Miss Rhoda Broughton, and her work, 'Not Wisely but Too Well,' which was destined to attain great popularity.

Her uncle good-naturedly took the matter in hand, and sent the story to Mr. Bentley, who, as usual, was shrewd enough to mark the talent of the writer. He was not inclined, however, to make a start with this work, but published another of hers, 'Cometh Up as a Flower,' which at once established her reputation. She is, in truth, a most original writer, with a profound knowledge of character and human passions.

In our midnight talks we had many jests with her on her stalwart heroes, who, it was insisted, owed their attraction to their invariably '*gnarled throats*,' and who were as invariably adored by some fragile *petite* creature, who could only worship, and whose worship was barely tolerated. A glance, however, or a kind careless word, would suffice to satisfy the little thing for weeks. It was the favourite fashion with the Hercules, we contended, to catch up the small frail creature in his iron embrace, crushing together all her tender bones. The sprightly authoress accepted these rallyings good-humouredly, and, indeed, was well able to defend herself.

There is nothing more sad or even pathetic than recognition of talent or genius which has come too late, and which involves the ignoring of the victim during his life. I recently took up a smart-looking, handsome volume, impressive as a well-dressed man, published by Macmillan—the second edition, with illustrations, etc. It was called 'Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts,' now a well-established book of folk-lore. There is a grateful, rather obsequious dedication to 'J. S. Le Fanu, Esq.,' alluding to his 'high position among English writers.' I can see the author now, a secondhand bookseller in a very small way, chiefly dealing in old, ragged school-books. He had been, I believe, a schoolmaster once, of the 'hedge' kind, and was a little, decayed old fellow, something like Ben Webster's old music copyist in 'One Touch of Nature.' He wore a long rusted coat, like Mr. Squeers's. He was snuffy and bald-headed, and was to be found all day long in a corner of his dark shop, where he earned a precarious livelihood—pennies and sixpences and shillings, and glad to have talk with his 'patrons' who occasionally dropped in.

At times an interruption came in the form of a lad or girl, offering some dilapidated Latin grammar or battered Virgil. To such persons our friend did not talk, but *grunted.* He had his system of dealing. 'Pooh! No use to me!' which was conveyed by a disparaging grunt. 'Plenty of copies in the shop'—grunt. 'Here, take 'em away'—grunt. Then suddenly: 'Give threepence'—grunt. This offer being rejected, he would contemptuously thrust back the goods on the owner, who, he conveyed, had injured him by taking up his time, and then would turn his back. This treatment always had its effect, and his price was taken; but he accepted grudgingly, still grunting, as though he repented him.

Mr. Le Fanu always declared that he was the type of Oliver Goldsmith, as he had a sort of gentle simplicity with the same credulousness. Indeed, it was astonishing to think that this Patrick Kennedy—for such was his name—under his snuffy outside, his grunts, and his squalid collection of ragged books, was a most cultivated being, deeply read, and interesting to a degree. His folk-lore he had acquired in the only genuine way, viz., by travelling about, listening to the peasants, old women, pedlars, grand-dames, and others.

Le Fanu's name suggests that of Sergeant, afterwards Judge Berwick, who was also in some indistinct way connected with Sheridan and Swift. He had many relics, traditions, etc., of those great personages.* He was an agreeable man, in great request at dinner-parties. It seems a hard, grotesque issue that a fatal accident, even destruction, should be brought about by a conscientious adherence to some provident, salutary rule that should help to preservation. I recollect meeting him once at a dinner, when he expatiated a good deal on the various methods of making the journey between London and Dublin with comfort and ease. 'Always break it, my dear sir,' he said; 'go down the evening before, get your luggage labelled for Chester, go to that capital Queen's Hotel, and have your sleep. Then pick up the mid-day train next day. I always do this, and have done it for years.' He repeated several times, as if all-important: 'But mind, get your luggage labelled for Chester.' Alas! he was destined to have this 'labelling' done once too often. He and his sister stopped at 'that capital hotel, the Queen's,' then joined the mid-day train, which proved to be the ill-fated one of the Abergele accident. Both were literally burnt to death.

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* He was an old friend of Forster's, who naturally called him 'Berrick,' though the other insisted on the strict local

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pronunciation, which was 'Ber-wick.' Similarly Mr. Le Fanu, who ought to have been Le Fănu, according to French rule, was always 'Leffănoo.' There is a vast number of these old Huguenot names in Dublin: Chambrè, Le Nauze, Tabiteau, La Touche, Perrin, Chaigneau, and the like.

The moral may be that it is never well to adhere too inflexibly to these certain rules. There are persons who will fix a day for doing something—for going on a journey, etc., and 'no power on earth,' as they put it, will get them to change this purpose, though nothing is involved.

Anthony Trollope was a rather prosaic personage. With his bluff, short, stoutish figure and rusted beard, he seemed a man of business with commercial tastes. Such, indeed, he was; and no one knew better than he how to 'exploit' his work to the best advantage. I remember once at a little dinner he frankly explained to us his system and method of work. He rose early, worked hard before breakfast—indeed, did most of his writing before ten or eleven o'clock. He described to us his method of writing in a railway-carriage, which, from habit, he could prosecute unaffected by the curious starings or interruptions of his neighbours. He made it a rule to do exactly the same amount of work every day, and cover the same quantity of paper. This seems mechanical enough, and fatal to anything like inspiration. One would suppose that there would be seasons when to leave off would be to sacrifice the whole spirit of the situation. A writer whose heart is in his work will not let himself be thus bound by iron rules. Trollope, however, contended that he could resume his work with the same spirit as he had when he left off. The system accounts for the sort of dead-level and unexciting strain which his later works betray. He dealt with his productions in a thoroughly shrewd, business spirit, getting large sums from the publishers.

Many years ago, when he was 'quartered' in Ireland, in the service of the Post Office, he had not yet turned his thoughts to writing novels, and was known as an admirable hardworking official, and admired for his devotion to hunting, a pastime which he contrived to follow in a thoroughly practical and economical spirit. He had always a good serviceable little animal, which he had purchased cheaply, and with which he managed to have many a pleasant day with the Ward staghounds or the Kildare Hunt. He thus had more real enjoyment than those who kept large and costly studs. It was not, however, until Thackeray had launched the *Cornhill Magazine* that he found he possessed his mother's gift of story-telling, and obtained a genuine success with 'Framley Parsonage.' From that moment no one's pen was in so much demand. His tales were exactly suited to the general taste of the community; they were unexciting in plot, but full of pleasant natural characters. By-and-by he 'turned editor'—that is to say, gave his name and apparent direction to a magazine, the *St. Paul's*, I think—but with indifferent result. He had no gifts in that direction, and the periodical, in his hands, became colourless and uninteresting.

I knew him very well, and always found him cordial and good-natured. He was good enough to propose me at the Garrick Club, and took much trouble to secure my admission to that pleasant society. It was sad to compare the flourishing triumphs of his early days of success with the decay—almost inevitable—which seems to await the popular writer. He used to receive large sums, together with the 'colonial and American rights,' then most profitable, and was often furnishing two or three stories at the same moment. But before he died he had said all that he had to say.

A pleasant figure of these Dickensian days was the late Chief Justice Cockburn. I see him now, with his pippin-like face, strained eyes, and high stock, his thin form arrayed in clothes of a somewhat old-fashioned cut. He could be most agreeable, and had what are called 'easy manners' in perfection. There was a finished style about him which, I think, is lost at the present moment, when everything is rather brusque, and where, it seems to me, people go straight to what they want without any intervening graces or delicacies. This style is based on a feeling of being superior to all that is trifling or inconvenient. The man of the world looks down from his lofty elevation on the smaller fry, and ignores their little ways; he does not feel the gnat-bites. I occasionally encountered the Chief Justice of an afternoon, at the house of some attractive dame whom he had enrolled among his favourites; and though he must have been *contrarié* to find an intrusive third person present, when he looked for a *tête-à-tête*, I admired his tranquil good-humour and accessibility, even though he were outstayed. This kind of man is rare. What would best describe his charm is the word 'finish.' Such persons have learned control—the art of gliding over awkward things, the art of seeing and feeling only what is agreeable.

Dickens often used to speak to me of John Poole, in whom I took much interest, on account of his witty story, 'Little Pedlington,' an admirable and original specimen of grotesque humour. He admired it exceedingly, especially the 'Guide-book.' Poole was certainly a genuine humorist, and it was always curious to think that the man with whose 'Paul Pry' Liston used to convulse audiences in the first quarter of the century should so lately have been alive in Paris, and occasionally visited by the novelist.

The name 'Little Pedlington' has furnished an illustration to popular writings, newspapers, etc.—a very exceptional thing. Yet there are many who quote the name who are quite unfamiliar with the book or what it is about. It is delightful for its sustained irony and the perfect faith in which it is written. The characters are admirably touched: the innkeepers, Daubson the artist, and his 'all but breathing' grenadier, with little Hoppy, Rummins and his museum. There are some chapters, however, strangely inconsistent, and clearly old magazine papers introduced to 'pad out' the volumes. He was one of Dickens's pensioners to the end of his life, and in the letters to Wilkie Collins is a truly grotesque description of poor old Poole as seen in his decay.

Once I met at Gadshill that excellent man, the late George Moore. For him Dickens had equal respect and regard. He loved such solid, unpretending men. George Moore was plain and blunt of speech, and yet excited an interest when you thought what a good specimen of the 'self-made' man he was. He would tell Dickens how he had entered London as a youth, and, getting engaged at a little haberdasher's shop, noted on the very first day a young woman sitting in the parlour—his master's daughter. He made a resolution before evening that one day she should be his wife, and so it came about. The great house of Moore, Copestake and Co., in the City, dealing in laces, trimmings, etc., was of his building up. On the first day at dinner I told him that Mr. Pim, one of a great Quaker firm in his own line, had just been elected to Parliament, after a severe contest. He started with delight and interest. 'I am *so* glad to hear it,' he said. Then, in his simple way, he proceeded to tell us with pride what a great business that of 'the Pims' was; that they were his largest customers in laces and such things, and he had vast transactions with them.

'Oh yes,' he repeated ; 'I am so glad Pim has got in.'

Dickens, I noticed, listened with great interest, and then said : 'See there ; you have the old, old story over again ; I am always meeting instances of it. You two have never met before, yet here you have a common link of interest.' This was a favourite theory of his, that the 'world was so much smaller' than people thought, and that everyone was mysteriously connected with his fellows.

On coming up to town with Mr. Moore, he asked me to come and see him at his house, and fixed a day for dining with him. I found him at a superb mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens, adorned with marble stairs, pictures, and statues, and every luxury. There was a large and miscellaneous company assembled, who exhibited an extraordinary obsequiousness to their wealthy host ; but he himself retained his native simplicity, and tolerated this servility. The scene recalled to me the dinner at Mr. Merdle's in 'Little Dorrit.' This excellent man became very conspicuous later in connection with the charitable work of helping the unhappy French on the raising of the siege of Paris.

Another interesting man of a finished pattern in those days was Monckton Milnes, later Lord Houghton. He was a finely-cultured specimen of the old school of letters, had elegant tastes, and not merely a fancy for the 'Belles Lettres' and reading generally. He was schooled in all the refinements of literature and criticism. Men of this type—Sir E. Lytton Bulwer and Forster were of the same pattern—are rare now, and were the last links that joined us to the era of Byron, Moore, and Rogers. He was certainly a most interesting man, albeit a little eccentric and grotesque even in his bearing, which was apt to astonish those who were not accustomed to his 'ways.'

He had a quaint figure, with many gestures and movements equally quaint. He was a most agreeable man to talk with, and always accessible. As might be expected in the case of one who had known so many notable persons, he had many curious things to tell. I recollect his good-naturedly shaking his head over my own too numerous performances. 'Doing too much,' he said—'much too much.' And no doubt he was right.

A long-cherished scheme of his was a life of Mrs. Crewe, for which he was collecting materials from all quarters. He once applied to me to find out for him some particulars about Mrs. Canning, the statesman's mother, and I was able to refer him to a curious work of Bernard the actor, where there is much about her. He was particularly good-natured about his own papers and materials, and has often had letters copied for me out of his interesting stores.*

He was one of the last survivors of the old school of literary men, a class that cultivated and finely polished their taste, touched and retouched every line they wrote, and found exquisite pleasure in the process. Their maxim was, 'Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.' Hence the charm of his delicate ballads and verses, which at one time were universally read. His prose was no less correct, and even elegant. He wrote a life of the poet Keats, which has long been out of print, and an agreeable volume of recollections. Many verses appeared with his name which were not of his writing. I once praised to him a ballad of his thus signed, when he shook his head. 'Pretty,' he said; 'but not mine. There are scores of such things for which I get the credit—or discredit.'

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* Every writer knows Mr. Alfred Morrison's (of Fonthill) magnificent collection of autographs, and the superb and sumptuous catalogue in many volumes in which his treasures are described. His liberality in placing these at the disposal of authors is even better known. If we take up any modern work of memoirs or history, we are certain to find an acknowledgment of Mr. Morrison's kindness. This indulgence is not very general, collectors fancying that the value of their autographs is somewhat diminished when they are printed.

He once asked me down to his country place—Fryston, near Pontefract—where I spent three agreeable days: a moderate-sized house, but in good classical taste, with a Greek portico. Close by was Ferrybridge, once the great posting-place for those going north. Here was still the large posting inn, with its huge range of stabling, where, as he told me, in his father's day, often forty or fifty private chaises halted to refresh and change horses. It was pleasant to see him here, devoted to his reading and his studies, for he was quite modern in his tastes, and kept well abreast with all the new literature of the time. He was interested in young men and in the writings of young men. He took great pride in his library, a handsome, spacious apartment, with a gallery running round it. Here was his extraordinary collection of the poets of the century—a vast number, as may be conceived, of the versifiers and poetasters, good and bad—all curiously and regimentally uniform in shape and size, and all beautifully bound. He sighed, however, over his binder's annual bill.*

A curious incident at one of the first of Irving's public suppers caused some talk at the time. It was in the first flush of the actor's popularity and success. 'The Merchant of Venice,' with its beautiful scenery and refined mounting, had completely carried away the town; everybody had seen it. It was all novel and delightful, yet few suspected that the manager's exertion had been made with the most perfect ease, and with but little trouble, the whole affair being arranged within three or four weeks—so completely was he filled with the true spirit of the thing. On the hundredth night he had invited everyone of 'light and leading,' as the phrase runs, to celebrate the event at a magnificent supper. Many will recall the pleasantly exciting incidents and the wonderful management with which the difficulties of preparation were surmounted. No sooner had the curtain fallen on the play than a crowd of workmen invaded the stage. A vast tent or marquee of red-and-white material had somehow been suspended among the scenes aloft; this was set up or pitched in an incredibly short space of time. Then Gunter's men brought on their tables and spread the viands; everybody's place was marked for him, and within about half an hour the company could take their seats.

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* The impulse to publish a volume of poems is perhaps one of the most irresistible of all impulses known. Few people have an idea of the quantity of volumes published every year. They are, of course, sacrifices to vanity in its purest form. I remember a publisher showing me a volume of poems he had issued for one of these enthusiasts. 'This,' he said, 'is a genuine curiosity. It has been out a long time, but, literally and truly, I have sold one copy of it, and that to one of the author's friends.'

Lord Houghton was allotted the duty of proposing the manager's health, and, somewhat to the surprise of his listeners, he treated the subject in a jocular, half-sarcastic vein, complimenting him on presenting us with 'a gentlemanly Jew, like one of the Rothschilds,' and which, he seemed to hint, was scarcely the legitimate view. I can quite understand, however, what led him to this declaration. He had been trained in the good old school of criticism and of legitimate acting; he could not 'unlearn' now, nor could he bring himself publicly to praise, even in conventional fashion, what in his heart he could not approve. He took refuge, therefore, in this sort of persiflage. He also dwelt, in a fashion that seemed to his professional listeners a little patronising, on the improvement in the tone of actors and actresses, and added, 'We now put our sons and daughters sometimes into the profession.'

One of his amiable failings was an eagerness to know everyone who was at all remarkable or celebrated; it is said, indeed, that he had made a list of portentous length of all the notable persons 'with whom he had shaken hands.' This was an amusing and pardonable foible, which must have given him much piquant entertainment.*

It is curious now to turn over the pages of the old 'Books of Beauty,' 'Souvenirs,' 'Keepsakes,' and the like—really elegant things, bound in rose-coloured silk, and set off with exquisite engravings—and to light on the invariable poem or sonnet by 'R. Monckton Milnes.' He seemed to be indispensable. Among persons of the highest fashion there was then a taste for sentiment and poetical trifles, which it is hard to understand now. Beyond doubt he was a most accomplished man, and of the most cultivated tastes. He had a wonderful stock of curious stories and pieces of secret history. He was thoroughly unaffected, as I found when he once came to dine with me, in a very unassuming way, and made himself most agreeable and entertaining.

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* It was said that when the late Sir Richard Burton was first made a lion of, and his adventures in everyone's mouth, there was a tale circulated of his having summarily put an Arab to death who had discovered him to be a Christian. Monckton Milnes—as he was then—expressed much horror at this proceeding; but he was presently seen asking to be introduced, and heard was courteously inviting the traveller to breakfast.

He took pleasure in the society of the good Cardinal Manning. Boswell has described Johnson's 'bow to a bishop,' but more striking even was Lord Houghton's reception of the Cardinal, whom he had not seen for a long interval, his bow being compounded of reverence and pleasure, with even a courteous *simulation* of bending over the ring as if to kiss it. One of his pious sayings was almost worthy of À Kempis, and showed a spirit of deep meditation. 'I always strive to be humble, but, alas! *I know that I am so.*' I have particular pleasure in casting this little chaplet on the grave of one who was always kindly and good-natured.

Sir Emerson Tennant had the air of the old-fashioned statesman, as we see him in Lawrence's pictures, being usually arrayed in his high-collared coat, with a rich and glossy wig—which loudly proclaimed itself a wig. That was the correct 'note' in those days for a wig—perhaps from a lack of skill in simulating the natural hair. He was a pleasant and hospitable man, often asking you to visit him at his fine seat Tempo, in Fermanagh. He had many stories to tell, and he told them well. He was once walking with a Dean through the cloisters of some cathedral or college, when he remarked on the unseemly inscriptions scrawled over the walls. 'Eh? What? Pooh, that's nothing,' said the Dean. 'Why, *I* remember when it was always "*Down with the Bishops.*"'

Who has not heard of the cordial, ever good-humoured, most skilful physician, Sir Richard Quain? Social, witty, always cheerful, with a genial, pleasant smile, he has been for years the literary man's friend and counsellor; and in the shifting of the social kaleidoscope his is one of the dramatic figures which the eye follows with most interest, to be 'idly bent,' after he withdraws, 'on him that enters next.' No one has ever had the aid of his friendly service without being also benefited by his encouragement and hopefulness. It need not be said that such a man is everywhere popular. At the club in Pall Mall it is pleasant to see him 'drop in' for a few moments, after the busy work of the day is over, when he may be observed flitting from friend to friend, or group to group, scattering his jests broadcast, for he has a genial wit of his own. Some years ago, on the death of a relation of his bearing the same name—a physician also—there were many who assumed that it was the favourite Sir Richard who had departed. The Prince of Wales, meeting him shortly after, congratulated him in his pleasant way on being still alive, adding: 'So sure was I, or so afraid, rather, that it was you, that I was actually thinking of ordering a wreath.' 'I am glad, too,' was the happy reply, 'that there was no occasion for it; but recollect, sir, *you are now committed to the wreath.*'

I once asked him what he thought of certain well-advertised articles of woollen clothing, the invention of a German doctor. 'There's no harm in using them,' he said; 'I really believe they are *not inferior* to any of the ordinary articles in use.' His faithful, devoted attendance on his old friend Forster continued to his deathbed. No one more thoroughly appreciated his skill and devotion than did Forster.

CHAPTER VII.

'ELIA'—EDWARD FITZGERALD—THE PROCTERS—CALDECOTT—G. H. LEWES, ETC.

THERE are some writers who excite a special personal interest, like living persons, and who are almost lovable. Among them are Boswell, Johnson, and Charles Lamb. We are never tired of searching for details concerning their lives, ways, and manners. Elia has this attraction in a pre-eminent degree; and I vividly remember the pleasure I found many years ago in issuing a pretty-looking little quarto, called 'Charles Lamb: his Homes, his Haunts, and his Books.' Lamb's publisher—'bookseller of poets, and poet of booksellers'—Edward Moxon, long associated, too, with Tennyson, whose little books he issued in a dainty shape, elegant print, and green cloth, such as they never since enjoyed—shares some of this interest. After his death it was pleasant to find his son still striving, but with indifferent success, to carry on the old firm; but the business was virtually in the hands of Mr. Payne, known for his 'Villon Society,' his translations of the 'Arabian Nights,' and other work of the kind. With the young Moxon I arranged for a full and complete edition of Lamb's work in six volumes —a very serious, spirited, and costly undertaking, from which many would have shrunk.* He was very eager in the project, and anxious to do something to support the credit of his house. But what was most interesting was that his mother, Emma Isola, Lamb's 'pet,' to whom many of his letters and verses were addressed, was still alive.

Once he offered to take me down to her house in the country, to hear from her her recollections, and to be shown her various relics and papers. Unluckily, something interposed, and she died not long after; so I lost this agreeable interview.

It was surprising, however, the number of 'connecting links' with the great writer this project discovered for me. In such cases a few years make all the difference. We must 'take the instant by the forward top,' or suddenly we shall find one day that we are too late, and that everything has disappeared.

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* Each volume contained some 500 pages, and the whole was stereotyped. The plates weighed some tons, and nearly filled a cellar.

In this instance Lamb had been dead nearly fifty years; yet I found myself conversing familiarly with friends of his, such as Forster, who had known him well, and could show me his letters. It was also curious to find one's self in communication with Allsop, who was intimately connected with Coleridge and all his 'set,' and who kindly sent me his book, and exerted himself generally in favour of my scheme. I had letters from Mrs. Cowden Clarke—erst the fair Sibilla Novello, one of Lamb's prime favourites. Another friend of Lamb's, who had painted his portrait, sent me an interesting account of the picture in a letter to one of the younger Moxons:

'My friend Mr. Allsop tells me you would like to publish any letters I have of Charles Lamb, and that you would be glad of the loan of my portrait of him. I enclose a copy of the only letter I possess, all the others my father received from him having been lost in transit from Oxford by the Great Western Railway. I do not remember whether this letter appeared in Talfourd's first notice of Lamb, and I have not a copy of that work to refer to ; but I rather think it was not published, as Talfourd, advocate-like, was inclined to suppress any evidence of Lamb's one little weakness. The head of C. Lamb, from a portrait by me, which he says is not the least like, is, I suppose, an attempt I made to paint a portrait after his death. My father and Lamb's friends wished me not to touch the unfinished picture. I was unsuccessful in this attempt, and the canvas was sent away as worthless. My name would probably be on the back of the canvas. At the time H. Robinson wrote, my picture had never been out of my possession, and he had not seen it. Mr. Gutch, an intimate friend of Lamb's, and one of the few who at that time justly appreciated him, liked my portrait so much that he asked me to make a small copy for him, and he used to take pleasure in showing it as a likeness of Lamb. Lord Houghton has this sketch, which was sold at Mr. Gutch's sale for nearly double the sum I received for it. Mrs. Moxon—"Isola,"—your mother, I believe, at my request came to see the original picture, which Mr. Payne bought from me, and afterwards wrote the following letter :

'"*June* 26, 1867.

'"DEAR MR. CAREY,

'"I cannot refrain from expressing to you my sincere pleasure at seeing my dear old friend so truly portrayed in your painting. It is indeed full of interest to me, being so perfectly characteristic of Charles Lamb and his sister. I am sure anyone who at all knew them would at once see how exactly you have pictured them.

'"Yours,

'"EMMA MOXON."

'Nevertheless, I am afraid, against all this evidence, the dead man's dictum will prevail, and no one who has not seen Lamb will care for my picture.'

One of those rare persons who have won general recognition only after their deaths was the late Edward Fitzgerald. He was an unobtrusive man, retiring in his ways and character—indeed, was little known to the general community; but his letters, lately published, joined with the loud praises of his friends, to say nothing of his remarkable translation of 'Omar Khayyâm,' excited a prodigious interest. When I was preparing this edition of Charles Lamb's life and works, I received the following letter from him :

'SIR,

'I had read somewhere, some while ago, that you were engaged on a new edition of Charles Lamb's life, letters, etc., but I did not know till the last *Athenæum* told me how far your work had gone.

'I venture to mention two or three memoranda of him which you may not have lighted upon, or may have forgotten. If not, you will, I hope, excuse me noting what you have already known, and perhaps might not care to remember.

'1. A capital letter to a farmer who had sent him a sucking-pig, dated "Twelfth Day, 1823." This letter was in the *Athenæum* some years back, but I took no note of the number. I can transcribe it if you care to have it. No one can doubt who was the author.

'2. An account of Lamb's first introduction to Matthews, by Coleridge. This is to be found in Mrs. Matthews' Life of her husband. Lamb was in one of his perverse humours. I suppose you quote Haydon's account of that dinner at Lisson Grove with Wordsworth and the old stamp-distributor whose cranium Lamb *would* feel. I hope Lamb's letter to Godwin about some election, quoted in Haydon's book, may be available to you.

'3. The account of a visit to Lamb at Colebrook Cottage by Mitford (Rev. John), in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May, 1838, when Mitford was its editor. He says he has little to add to what others have told, unless, perhaps, Lamb's pretty answer to someone asking him how he knew his tattered, unlabelled books, "How does a shepherd know his sheep?" Elsewhere Mitford recalls delightful suppers—"Miss Lamb opening the door, and Lamb preceding us upstairs."

'4. Lamb going with Kenney and Howard Payne to see Talma's Shakespeare portrait; and Lamb's "Incidit in Scyllam," in reply to Talma's inviting them to see his Sylla.

'5. Is the story commonly known of Lamb, busy at his India House desk, saying to a friend who called, "I shall revolve on you soon"? and his reply to some expostulation at his coming late to office, "But then I go soon away."

'6. At p. 242 of Talfourd's "Final Memorials": "August, 1831.—The *Athenæum* has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry that was two or three months ago in Hone's book," etc. (*Table-Book*, April number, 1831). Someone had sent Dilke the verses, which begin, I think :

> ''Tis a dull sight
> To see the year dying,' etc.

and Dilke thought Lamb was the author, as he says he wished to have been.

'I think there are a few more points that I could name ; but enough for now, and more than enough if useless to you. I shall get your edition forthwith, and hope it will gather into one harmonious whole what others have more or less discursively supplied.

'Your obedient servant,
'EDWARD FITZGERALD.'

This Elian labour also brought me into connection with another interesting and accomplished man, Frederick Locker, now quite an old friend. He is one of the rare few in our Guild who is scrupulously delicate in his work. Everything he possesses must be choice and elegant. All book-fanciers know, or have heard of, his library, selected with the nicest taste, and containing the most inviting rarities, of which some years ago he formed an interesting and much-admired catalogue. It is indeed entertaining reading. I am always pleased and flattered to think that a little book of my own—a *cento* of Elia's good things—should have found a place in this select collection. His various works exhibit the same charm of grace and elegance. His poems are, of course, well known and admired; but almost more interesting is his little collection of notes, reminiscences, and anecdotes, which exhibit the same nicety in the selection. One of his quaint book-plates, designed by Stacey Marks, is now before me. It portrays a 'Motley' seated under a tree. The same correctness, and 'distinction' even, adds much to his social attraction.

To this Elian venture I owed acquaintance with that interesting man, Mr. Procter. It is rarely that we find in one family so gifted a trio as the Procters: Barry Cornwall, the poet; Mrs. Procter, his wife, a woman of strong mind and incisive speech; and their daughter Adelaide Anne, that most graceful and touching of poetesses. I once went to see Barry Cornwall at his house in Weymouth Street, and found him a grave, interesting old man, of very gentle, courteous manners, who talked pleasantly of literary matters. Some years later I wrote a little book on Charles Lamb, a number of rather curious 'odds and ends' which I had gathered together. It happened that at the moment Procter was preparing to publish his own personal recollections of Lamb. He had known him well, and had much to tell of him. He, and his friends also, were not a little distressed that another book on the subject should be put forward at the same time; it was thought that attention might be distracted from the old man's account, though, indeed, as it proved, there was nothing to be dreaded in this way, as he had genuine reminiscences to relate and much interesting information. From the trusty Forster—always ready to interest himself for a friend—I received an earnest appeal, but unluckily the book had gone from my hands to those of Mr. Bentley and the printers, and it was too late to stop the publication. But, as it proved, no harm was done.

Nothing could be more moderate or graceful, or even kindly, than his way of treating this incident. We have only to consider what his position and reputation were.

'My dear Dickens,' he wrote to his friend,

'If you should have an opportunity, I wish you would tell Mr. Percy Fitzgerald that I have read his (really very pleasant) little book, and that I quite appreciate the tone and manner of his reference to my expected volume. I have one advantage only, in that I was for many years an intimate of Elia's. In other respects I cannot compete with anyone, being too old and stupid to do so, and I am sure that he will be the first to see this when my memoir shall appear. Having nothing further to say, so as not to interfere with the next number of *All the Year Round*, I pray God to have you in His holy keeping (allowing you some ninety years more to keep alive). I can scarcely write.

'Yours sincerely,
'B. W. PROCTER.'*

When his book was on the eve of appearing, he wrote :

'Thank you for your letter. I know that Forster wrote to you, and that your answer was satisfactory in all respects. But apart from the necessities of your position, you had surely an undoubted *right* to publish anything you chose about Lamb without reference to me. Your book (besides being very pleasant itself) has, I think, been of real service to my forthcoming volume. About this little "volume" (scarcely more than a pamphlet) I must disabuse your mind. I am asked (employed) to write a memoir of Charles Lamb, to give rather my personal recollections than a "life and times," etc. I need not tell you it is as unlike Gibbon or Macaulay—or even Dizzy's "Life of Lord John (George) Bentinck"—as possible. It has no pretensions, nor any length (which is the appearance of pretension), but merely the old recollections of an old man. I wish I had tried to do my best twenty years ago, for at seventy-seven neither the hand nor the memory is very strong or active. I should surprise you were I to tell you with what labour these few lines are written. I shall take the liberty of sending you the book when published. You can read it, or light your pipe with it, as you please. I am somewhat indifferent as to its general success (except that I should like persons I like to like it). When one approaches octogenarianism, sleep and rest are the two great things desirable. I shall be glad when the printer will permit me to finish my book-*let* (as Lamb would say). Lastly, let me say, I have this one gratification: There is no one living who knew Lamb so well as I did. Certainly there is no one who loved him so much.

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* An interesting 'old bookseller,' Mr. Stibbs, of Oxford Street, into whose shop I used often to stray, said one day : 'All Charles Lamb's books passed through my hands. They were all in shocking condition—dirty, torn, and patched.' This supports Elia's own description of his 'midnight darlings' as 'ragged veterans.'

'Dear sir, I am very truly yours,

'B. W. PROCTER.'

This seems a very charming old man's letter, and it has many quaint turns. The number of agreeable "asides" will be noted—that is to say, the turning aside for parentheses—always a delicate and effective garnish for writing, though purists object. Old men are often touchy and crotchety when they are 'crossed' in some favourite 'fad'; but no young man, I think, could write with such modest good-humour.*

Mrs. Procter, his wife, was a clever person, keenly acute in judging others, and uttering smart, not to say stinging, things—or what appeared to be smart and stinging, from the sort of metallic or 'horny' voice in which they were conveyed. Once at a dinner-party given by Dickens—when he was living at Sussex Place—I sat beside her, the host being on the other side. Between him and her there was a rare encounter of raillery and 'chaff.' She was rather unsparing in her criticisms of those she did not like. 'I tell you what So-and-so is,' she would say racily—'he is neither more nor less than A BULLY!' These speeches would 'startle' not a little. But she was always amusing, and her incisive power she retained to a very advanced age.

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* The gifted and interesting Adelaide Anne is associated with one of the little romances of writing. I often heard Wills relate how they were puzzled at 'the office' by a certain poet who signed 'Berwick.' One day at the Procters', when Dickens was describing this mysterious contributor, it was revealed to him that it was Adelaide Procter who had thus so long disguised herself.

The late Archbishop of York, Dr. Thomson, was a stately personage, of fine presence, and a good specimen of the 'full-blown' prelate. He used to come a good deal to the Athenæum; but it is sad to note how that fine figure gradually fell away into a sort of ruin. Once I tried to set on foot a little project for erecting in York Minster a tablet to the memory of Sterne, whose life I had written, and who had been a prebend of York; and I was encouraged in this by Lord Houghton and a few others, who promised me subscriptions. I applied to the then Dean, who graciously gave his permission; also to the Archbishop, who replied in this cordial strain: 'I write to say that I will gladly give my name and a small subscription to the project of erecting a tablet to the memory of Laurence Sterne. Such a name does not want a monument; but if you and others think it good to have such a record in the church with which he was once connected, I shall be ready to assist. Permit me the pleasure of saying, even if it appear presumptuous, that I read your excellent biography of Sterne with great pleasure. It is more interesting than a romance; and while you lean to the side of charity, as a biographer should, the errors of your subject are honestly dealt with.'

With all this encouragement, the public generally did not seem to care at all about Yorick and his tablet, and I had eventually to abandon the project.

At one of my friend Mr. Henry Blackburn's agreeable parties, I met that pleasant being and fine artist, Randolph Caldicott. He was a hard-working, unaffected fellow, with a natural aptitude for making friends. It was difficult not to be attracted by him. In his own line he was certainly unrivalled. Nothing can be more delicate or refined than his illustrations of Bracebridge Hall and Old Christmas, his 'John Gilpin' and such ballads. But there can be no doubt that in his later efforts he fell off, and the demand for his work prompted him to very hurried exertion. It may have been that the public tired of the style. He was fond of writing in under his sketches some would-be 'humorous' comments, which, it must be confessed, were flat, and really impaired the effect of the sketch. It is indeed difficult to account for the fact that a man may be a humorist with his pencil, and insipid and feeble with his pen. But I have seen many instances of this contradiction. I once made a little collection of his sketches, and asked him to supply a frontispiece, when he wrote this good-natured letter :

'I have sent by book-post the roll of the *Graphic* and other prints, with a scribbled sketch of a title-page. If it is not important enough, I will make another some day with pleasure. You have pasted the title of "Wychdale Steeple" over a sketch of the race for the St. Leger—Silvio's year, which is one of the Scarborough series. D——'s drawings I never saw before this roll came, but heard it was in flattering imitation of the style of my "Christmas Visitors." It must not be lost amongst mine. I mentioned in a note your proposition about a reproduction of my *Graphic* contributions, but have not yet received a reply. I will let you know what they say.' With this letter he sent me a humorous sketch.

An agreeable man with a cordial manner was Sir William Boxall, for many years a director or keeper of the National Gallery. In his time he was a portrait-painter of distinction, but his name is now almost forgotten. Nothing, indeed, is more striking than the transitoriness of the reputation enjoyed by painters, who thus pass away like shadows. Who thinks now of the once fashionable Buckner, whose dames of high degree, much bejewelled, in glistening satin dresses, had the place of honour at every Academy exhibition? The insipidity of these efforts was remarkable. There, too, reigned Sir Francis Grant, with *his* fashionable ladies and noble sportsmen—M.F.H.'s—in glaring scarlet on their very wooden bay horses, and surrounded by their equally wooden hounds. No subscription portrait could be correctly entrusted to anyone else. With him it was felt to be a 'safe thing.'* In those corrupt days I am glad to think I had taste enough to turn away from such conventional things. Even the late Frank Holl, R.A., who was so much admired and bewailed, would scarcely 'go down' now. Every Bishop, Member of Parliament, Head of College, etc., had to be limned by Holl. His system seemed to bring out everything in light and shadow which had an air of force and vigour, but the result was hard and uninteresting.

In the rage for realistic treatment and bold startling colour, we have utterly lost sight of and neglected the old elegant treatment—the idea of grace and refinement, the high-bred air, which Chalon, and Jackson even, succeeded in imparting. People are now lost in admiration at a massive crimson velvet dress — the work, it may be, of Sarjeant or Carolus Duran.

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* Sir Francis was an almost 'comedy character' from his courtly ways and devotion to the 'upper circles.' Sometimes we find the note of character revealed in a vivid and striking way by the merest trifle. At the Academy, one morning, I saw the President rushing through the room in an almost painful state of flutter and agitation. He was followed by a familiar, almost as agitated, 'Where? Where is he? The Prince not here! Good heavens!' Then he was gone. Prince Christian, it seems, was in the rooms, and, *horribile dictu*, going about unattended!

To return to Boxall, who was a refined, conscientious painter of the old school, modelling his faces carefully. Mr. Forster had a fine portrait of his, of Savage Landor, of a rich glowing colour. There is also a beautiful though unfinished portrait of Mrs. Forster, full of grace and spirit, and done in the Chalon manner. At Forster's table I have met him, and could almost say as Sam Weller did to the Bath footman, 'Sir, I think you're very pretty company.'

Once at a pleasant dinner-party given by Dickens, when he was living at Cumberland Place, I found myself beside Sir Edwin Landseer. He was then a short, stoutish man, with a round face and gray moustache. I remember he spoke with a sort of mystery of the wonderful things he had seen in that very room. The house belonged to Mr. Milner Gibson. It was the time of the 'Home' mania, and he described the figure floating near the ceiling. He did not, I think, actually profess to be a believer, but he said, 'I only tell you what I saw.' Dickens's manner to him was delightful. A sort of good-humoured badinage went on between the old friends during the dinner. Not much margin of life was then in store for either. For Dickens there was to be but a few months more of his brilliant course, while for the painter there was approaching a sad and clouded close.

Many years ago one of the most conspicuous figures of the time was George Henry Lewes, an extraordinary man, of multifarious gifts and singular abilities — an original thinker, too. Scholar, reviewer, novelist, philosopher, naturalist, dramatist, dramatic critic, editor, such were some of the many forms in which he exhibited his great powers. His peculiar relations with that real genius, 'George Eliot,' were tolerated by the community with exceptional indulgence, some form of extenuation being pleaded. 'Mr. and Mrs. Lewes' were invited out. The share he had in inspiring and directing his partner's literary efforts is well known. He was certainly a good critic, with, however, some strange, vehement prejudices and 'views' of his own. One of his least known but most masterly performances is a collection of dramatic notices, which exhibit a wonderful sagacity and knowledge of the true principles of acting and of the drama. He was the first editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, in which, perhaps for the first time, was exhibited the *personal* principle; but he seemed himself to direct or inspire every contribution. Occasionally he reviewed a particular book, when he seized the opportunity to develop his own special opinions on some point of criticism, with the result of supplying an agreeable essay of quite a different pattern from the conventional review. Such, too, would he sign. On these occasions he was uncompromising, and both spoke out and hit out freely.

On one occasion he selected a work of mine as a sort of *corpus vile*, I suppose, by which to illustrate his theories. I had written a novel called 'Never Forgotten,' and he took for his text the odd theory that most of the existing male writers wrote like women! 'I have but a slight acquaintance with the novelists of our day, but, as far as my observation extends, the number of them who draw character well is excessively small; and of those who succeed moderately, the women seem to me to draw heroes quite as accurately—or inaccurately—as the men draw heroines. The mass of writers fail in both—nay, more, the very style of drawing which is said to be peculiar to women is the style observable in the works of men. Just as bad acting is of the same style all over Europe, so is bad character-drawing the same in France and Germany as in England, the same in the novels of men and the novels of women.'

This fantastic theory had a curious psychological basis, of which, perhaps, he was himself unconscious—his faith in the one woman writer, George Eliot, whose brilliancy made him intolerant and jealous of even the smaller fry. Having expounded his principle, he then returned to the *corpus vile*, on which he danced in this fashion :

'"Never Forgotten" is an example of a very common style. It has no artistic elegance ; but as a specimen of novel manufacture—the cheap-cotton-goods of literature — it is a marketable commodity, and it is in some respects even respectable of its kind. It can be read, which is more than can be said of dozens of its rivals.'

Dickens, I remember, spoke with some severity of this attack. My story had, in a manner, appeared under his auspices—had been published in his journal ; he had even furnished it with its name, 'Never Forgotten.' Dickens's style and methods Lewes could not tolerate ; and about a year after Dickens's death he wrote a 'slashing' article, in which he likened his characters to the 'wooden horses of children with hair for mane and tail, and wafer spots for colouring.' He described him as 'a seer of visions' and as 'having hallucinations,' none of his creations having any likeness to things in nature. This tone, I am certain, was inspired by the curious morbid jealousy before alluded to, and by his intolerance of anyone who was set up as a rival to the great writer in whose work he was so interested. Forster, however, in the 'Life,' fell upon him and his theory, which he dealt with in good slashing style.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLANCHÉ—CHARLES WATERTON.

I HAVE always liked and constantly sought the company of ripe, observant, intelligent old people who have seen and gathered a great deal. Such have often much that is curious to tell, but they feel that the world is indifferent to their stores, so they shrink back into themselves. A little 'leading,' and a display of interest or sympathy, will usually tempt them into unlocking their cupboards. I have heard many curious things in this way, and have learned something of the art of 'drawing them out.' But in truth it is a real pleasure to be with such people, provided they are not, as Johnson said, 'remnants of one's self.'

There is nothing more interesting than 'linkings' with the past, and I have been fortunate in occasionally meeting with many 'scattered swimmers in the social whirlpool.' I have talked with Shelley's son, and at dinner have sat beside Byron's school-fellow—Harness, his 'good old Harness.' I have heard Kemble's and Siddons' playing described vividly by that veteran playgoer, Mr. Fladgate. Another veteran, Howe—still, happily, living—can describe Kean for us. When I was writing an account of the Sheridans, Mr. Eliot, then father of the Athenæum Club, said to me: 'Why, I remember being taken by my father to see him at the famous Westminster Election.' I have dined in company with the late Mr. Holmes, who was acquainted with the Regent. Mr. Planché used to cause a start of surprise when he began a sentence with: 'I recollect when I was taken to see the illuminations for the Peace of 1802,' he being a child of three or four years, and held up on his father's shoulders to see the show. I have had a letter from the venerable Admiral Sir Provo Wallis when he was nearly one hundred years old, and I have taken a walk with an old gentleman who sat in the Irish Parliament. I have talked with that interesting, spirited old man, Mr. Charles Villiers, now about ninety years of age, and heard him relate curious political things sixty and seventy years old. When he was past seventy I met him at a dinner, and he was certainly the most agreeable and entertaining member of the party. When I was writing the 'Life of Garrick,' I received assistance from a number of the actor's descendants and connections, and I recall my astonishment when one of these brought me a large trunk that was literally crammed with letters and papers of all kinds, mostly in the handwriting of Garrick himself.

I can call up now a quaint figure of a brisk and vivacious old man, wiry in person, with intelligent eyes and white hair, of a foreign, rather *malin* expression about the mouth. This was Planché, the once famous dramatist, the wit and genial spirit of the stage world. Though at this time his stories had faded out of recollection, and he conveyed little more than a tradition to the generation among whom he lived, he had so energetic a spirit that he contrived always to be in touch with even the youngest. He had a great stock of tales and recollections, for he had met a vast number of persons of note, and he had been a bustling, dramatic personality enough, of considerable influence and importance, too, in the world in which he moved. At one time he was the grand caterer for the stage. It must be of necessity chilling and mortifying for a veteran of this kind to find himself 'gone by,' neglected and forgotten, and 'hanging in monumental mockery like a rusty mail, quite out of fashion.'*

He was the friend and counsellor of Vestris and Charles Mathews, and had been the mainstay of their theatre, the Olympic, and of many others. But I always looked at him with extraordinary interest, curiosity, and reverence, for one reason—and musicians will understand the feeling—that he, this brisk little modern man, had written 'Oberon' for Weber! He had rehearsed and altered it on the stage, and could describe the curious and perhaps cruel treatment his amiable *confrère* encountered.† It was difficult to imagine this, for Weber and his 'Der Freischütz' seems so very far off.

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* See the magnificent passage in 'Troilus and Cressida' (Act III., Scene 3, Ulyss., *loq.*) where these lines occur—to my mind, the finest in all Shakespeare. It describes and analyzes the sad decay of reputation and popularity—a dismal process. I have seen the lines above quoted thus ludicrously given: 'Hangs on a rusty nail, quite out of fashion.'

† At the rehearsals of 'Oberon,' after trial of one of the beautiful airs, which did not go well, the brusque, practical stage-manager said coolly, 'Must come out.' The fretted composer jumped on the stage and said vehemently, 'What for he shall *not* come out!'

Another great composer, Mendelssohn, had entered into regular negotiations with him for a libretto on the subject of the siege of Calais. There was much discussion and correspondence. The composer was at first delighted with what he had written, but somewhat capriciously changed his mind—in fact, treated Planché rather unhandsomely. Still, it was a wonderful thing to have been engaged in the service of two such eminent composers.

Not long before his death Planché's dramas were collected in six handsome volumes, published by subscription. Few can have an idea of how much he has done, and what a quantity of pieces he wrote, that still keep our stage, many of which he neatly shaped and adapted from the French. He was the inventor, almost, of a sort of refined burlesque, in which the gods and goddesses figured. On reading over these things, the impression left is that of dulness, or wit somewhat far-fetched. Still, one might admire the taste of the audiences at that time, which is infinitely more refined and intelligent than ours. I doubt if in our theatres the allusions—classical and others—would be understood. The wit, too, at times was a little recondite.

Planché was to find out this sense of hanging 'like a rusted mail' not many years before he died. When a vast scheme was set on foot by Boucicault and others for bringing out a magnificent spectacle at Covent Garden, either from good nature or belief in his reputation, the veteran was applied to to furnish a *feerie.* 'Babil and Bijou' was the result, which he wrote with all his old elegance and on the old Olympic pattern, with pretty songs. Hervé, then little known, furnished the music. The poor author fancied that he was to supply a charming pastoral fairy tale; but a rough and summary coadjutor was imposed on him, and I remember his bitter complaints of the way in which his verses and elegancies were hacked about and shorn away wholesale. Modern slang and modern vulgar jests were thrust in, and the whole 'brought up to date.' It was a cruel, mortifying awakening. No attention was paid to his remonstrances; he was unceremoniously put aside. He consoled himself by saying to an abnormally tall lady who played in it, and who asked him to write her a song: 'My dear, Longfellow is your man.'

I have an earlier recollection of him, when we were both staying at a country-house. He was in high spirits, and, after the fashion of the old school, would introduce anecdotes of Rogers, 'Tommy Moore,' and the rest. Once the host rather brusquely broke into one of these with some other subject, on which Planché said, rather pettishly: 'My lord, you are not attending to me.' 'My dear Planché,' said the host, 'I have heard you tell that story a hundred times.' This was rather rough on the old man. Some of his occasional verses were lively enough, and were, I suppose, circulated in MS. We can hardly imagine now anyone writing 'copies of verses' to be handed about. Such were the lines on the dining-out Dr. Quin, a name that conveys nothing nowadays. Yet Dr. Quin was once indispensable. At the dinner-parties announced in the *Morning Post* his name was to be invariably read, generally closing the list of Lords and wits, '*and* Dr. Quin.' Planché's lines were a parody of the national anthem, each verse ending 'God save the Quin.' Another of his *jeux d'esprit* was his enumeration of the various pronunciations of Monckton Milnes' new title, which at first was pronounced Howton, Hawton, Hooton, Hufton, etc. I fancy, however, that according to the laws of human sensitiveness, the new peer would not have been pleased at this form of jest. People do not relish having their names joked upon.

Planché's closing years were troubled, and he had many distresses and responsibilities which he encountered bravely. Not long before his death he wrote to me:

'I should not, indeed, think it any trouble to do anything in my power to oblige you, but you will find in my "Recollections" all I *can* tell about Charles Kemble to the public. What I know of his private life and habits, etc., I could never print, and the few anecdotes of him in later life, having reference principally to his deafness, would be painful to his family. I have avoided scrupulously, in my "Recollections," everything that could be objectionable, or twisted by malice into a betrayal of that confidence which so close an intimacy for years naturally engendered, and, indeed, beyond his public career I do not know anything that would be very interesting to the general reader. If there be any particular date or event on which I can give you more information than you would find in the *Gentleman's Magazine* or a file of the

Morning Chronicle, I shall be most happy to do so.

'I am scribbling for dear life to finish my "Recollections," of which I have two more batches to do (viz., September and October; August is gone to press) before I leave town, which will be on the 26th. I have also to be prepared with a paper on Corfe Castle for the Congress of the British Archæological Society at Weymouth on the 20th of next month, not one word of which is yet even thought of. All this, added to my public and private business, leaves me scarcely time to eat and sleep. You must, therefore, kindly excuse my not having called in St. George's Road, as I have constantly been wishing to do.'

The 'Recollections' here referred to are most agreeable and entertaining, and written with wonderful vivacity, considering his age. Indeed, it would seem that in these latter days the 'doddering' slowness and dulness of old age had been lessened or abolished altogether. It will be noted that old persons no longer are old-fashioned in dress, manners or thought, nor do they maunder over the merits of the old days. They rather prefer modern and new-fangled things. In these memoirs Planché deals pleasantly with some theories of my own concerning stage decoration and adornment.

When staying at Bournemouth about the year 1886, I found that Heron Court, Lord Malmesbury's mansion, was close by. The noble owner was always to me a most interesting 'personality,' on account of his bright, vivacious memoirs, written when he was all but an octogenarian, and which are stored with the most curious facts and reminiscences. It was wonderful to think that he had romped with the Princess Charlotte, and had taken part in the Battle of Waterloo. At Heron Court was a famous library, which I asked permission to visit, and its owner was good enough to write the following:

'It is with great regret that I am obliged to refuse your request to have admission to my library, and to everyone to the interior of Heron Court, when I am absent. When I used to give that permission I lost several valuable books, which were abstracted, and although I am aware that would not be the case on this occasion, I should offend several persons were I to make any distinction.'

I have another interesting link with the past. When I was a boy, and just come from school, I found at Richmond, where we were living, a hale, 'robustious,' cheery old gentleman, Mr. Edgeworth. He was the brother of the more famous Maria. I always looked at him with great interest, knowing that he well remembered the execution of Louis XVI., the details of which were often described to him by his relation, the Abbé Edgeworth, who had attended the unhappy monarch on the scaffold. He had, moreover, written a short life of the Abbé, which he presented to us with a suitable inscription on the title-page.

One fine specimen of 'the old man eloquent,' who had seen and could recall much, I used to meet at the Garrick Club. This was old Frank Fladgate—Papa' Fladgate, as he used to be called, the oldest member of the club. Readers of the later dramatic memoirs must have encountered his name frequently, for he had been a friend of John and Charles Kemble, of Mrs. Siddons, and of all the great stars of the stage. He lingered about the club, which he loved, almost to the last days of his life, and I have often seen him there, tottering, feeble, blind, and deaf. It was pathetic to see him feeling over some old theatrical volume, and straining his poor bleared eyes to make out a word. I always liked to hear him talk, and to encourage him to do so, and on these occasions I would gladly come to his rescue, reading him out some favourite passage, to which he listened almost with rapture.

Not long before his death I found him in the library, striving to *feel* out a passage which he could not see. It was a description of John Kemble, his hero, in Coriolanus, or some other grand character. I read it for him at length, to his delighted comments: 'Oh, that describes him exactly! I see him now—glorious John!' Then he took the passage for his text, and in a very vivacious way for one so old—he was near to ninety then—he gave me a very dramatic description of the great John's methods. He described him with extravagant praise in the character of Penruddock in the 'Wheel of Fortune,' and the wonderful pathos he put into one simple expression when he addressed the child, 'Come hither, boy! I think you are like your mother!' He conveyed very graphically the general 'gulping' sound, mingled with sobbings and blowing of noses, that filled the house as Kemble uttered these words.

In 'The Stranger,' too, when Mrs. Haller approached, Kemble was seated on a bench, and manifested his emotions in a rather odd fashion, but one which had an extraordinary effect upon the audience—the great tragedian's *knees* could be seen to quiver and knock together in his agitation! Yet there was nothing grotesque, Fladgate assured me, in the exhibition. He said he had often described this scene to Vandenhoff, and other modern actors, asking them, 'What d'ye think?' and their reply was usually, 'Oh, very fair! Very *nice*, indeed!'

He then begged of me to find the scene in 'King John' where the King is prompting Hubert. He declaimed it in a very genuine fashion, and I could see it must have been a fair representation of the 'points' made by the great player. He needed little assisting, and he suggested admirably the tone of the speech.

Turning then to Hotspur,* he expatiated on the magnificent impetuosity John Kemble threw into the part when the King was demanding the prisoners. Kemble was at the back of the scene, then came almost *leaping* down to the front, exclaiming in rapturous fashion, 'Not a Scot of them!'

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* I remember Mr. Planché giving a similar vivid picture of the style of Charles Kemble in the same character, and describing what he called 'his superb *chivalric* and gallant bearing,' which was irresistible, and carried every hearer away. This sort of tone is quite a lost art.

Fladgate had seen nearly all the last thirty-five performances of Kemble when he was retiring. The actor was invited to play Iago to Young's Othello, but frankly confessed to Fladgate: 'Sir, I tried it; but they did not like me.' Nothing, however, was more noble or convincing than his Othello. He was the perfect picture of a great man, and the darkening of his fine features did not in the least impair the effect.

These agreeable reminiscences were continued for more than an hour in the little library of the club, until the old playgoer had quite warmed up with enthusiasm. At last he paused. 'I declare,' he said, 'all this has quite done me good. Ah, but you have been drawing me out all this time!' In which there was some truth. I think I never saw him again after that morning, though to the last he contrived to drag himself down to his much-loved haunt. Peace be with thee, good old Frank Fladgate!

Another very interesting, original, and even unique character with whom I was intimate for some years was the late Charles Waterton, the celebrated naturalist. Dickens, like so many, was partial to his charming essays, and in the preface to 'Barnaby Rudge,' apropos of 'Grip,' quotes what he says on ravens. He was a rather 'wizened' and gnarled little old man, dry as a quince, usually wearing a blue tail coat buttoned across his very short waistcoat, allowing a large strip of the latter to appear below, with skimpy trousers, generally drawn up above his ankles.

It was strange to think of the stirring, adventurous life he had passed; of his famous 'wanderings' at a time when 'wandering' and voyaging was a much more difficult and dangerous thing than it is now; of the number of remarkable people he had met, and of his profound knowledge of his favourite science. More remarkable still was he for his high and noble principle, his fine feelings of honour and fairness, albeit he was 'bigoted' and fanatical. But this appeared more in his talk; in his acts he was liberal and tolerant. He was ascetical in his religion, and lived almost the life of a Trappist, faring like a hermit. This system, however, coincided with his hygienic views, in which he was also as bigoted as any temperance advocate of our day.

Thackeray, who knew him and esteemed him highly, has a fine tribute to him in 'The Newcomes':

'A friend who belongs to the old religion took me last week into a church where the Virgin lately appeared in person to a Jewish gentleman. My friend bade me look at the picture, and, kneeling down beside me, I know prayed with all his honest heart that the truth might shine down upon me, too; but I saw no glimpse of heaven at all, I saw but a poor picture, etc. . . . The good kind W—— went away humbly saying "that such might have happened again if heaven had so willed it." I could not but feel a kindness and admiration for the good man. I know his works are made to square with his faith, that he dines on a crust, lives like a hermit, and gives his all to the poor.'

A very touching and graphic, not to say affecting, sketch. Admirers of the novelist will be glad to identify 'W——' in the amiable old naturalist.*

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* I remember one of his sisters-in-law, Miss Edmonstone, showing me some verses which the novelist had written for

When I first knew him he must have been past seventy, but he was wiry, full of spirit and vigour, and decidedly eccentric. He was fond of displaying the power of his muscles, would hoist himself to the top of a door, and perform other feats, to the no small alarm of his friends. He was an ardent admirer of his old masters, the Jesuits, and had been one of the first of their scholars at their well-known flourishing establishment, Stonyhurst. He had climbed to the top of one of the clock-towers, and had stood on the great stone eagle that surmounts it.

I once spent some days with him and his son Edmund, my own friend and contemporary, at Walton Hall. It was a plain, unadorned stone house, approached by a bridge, and surrounded by woods which were peopled with all sorts of

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her—a translation of Horace's 'Persicos odi,' and done in a lively, pleasant strain. They were entitled 'Titmarsh on Mutton,' and began:

'Dear Lucy, you know what my wish is—
I hate all this Frenchified stuff;
These silly entrées and like dishes
Were never intended for us.'

'My dear madame,' wrote the novelist, 'the above sentimental version of an ode of Horace's is offered as a humble contribution to Miss Edmonstone's album by her faithful servant, W. M. T.'

curious birds and animals, who lived and throve there, carefully protected by their master.

Everyone knew and respected 'th' ould squoire,' as he was called, and tolerated good-humouredly his outbursts and prejudices. His museum of wonderfully stuffed birds had much celebrity ; I believe there was never known so scientific and skilful a bird-stuffer. These specimens were all prepared by himself. One of his fancies, not in the best taste, was the preparation of ingeniously compounded monsters, of hideous aspect, which he found a gratification in labelling 'Good Queen Bess,' 'Harry VIII.,' etc. There were slimy-looking frogs and toads marked 'John Calvin,' 'Martin Luther,' 'The Established Church,' etc., which were placed conspicuously in the hall, to the occasional scandal of visitors and sight-seers. Here, too, was 'the Nondescript,' a horrible-looking, half-human head, which it was said he had himself manufactured or compounded. He would never talk, however, of his famous ride on the cayman. I always fancied his conscience pricked him about this 'traveller's tale' of his young days.

His son Edmund, my schoolfellow and friend, was also a 'character.' He was of Herculean mould, some six feet two high, recalling the elder Dumas in his head and short curly hair, which was of a dark Indian cast. The contrast was extraordinary to the short and shrunken figure of his sire. In every respect they were totally opposed. The father lived like a hermit; the son was lavish and under little restraint in matters of expense. He always reminded me of another person of similar tastes, who lately said, 'My only fault is that I cannot deny myself anything.'*

He was a good antiquary, possessing much knowledge, and sparing no labour in research. He was specially learned in antique rings and their history, and had formed a really magnificent collection of these costly trinkets, the bulk of which was later purchased by the South Kensington Museum. Some of these cost large sums, that of Mary, Queen of Scots, I believe, £150. Carved ivories and other curios were also in his way.

On his father's death, when he came into his inheritance, he fell under the delusion that he could command vast wealth, and seriously planned rebuilding his house on a grand baronial scale.

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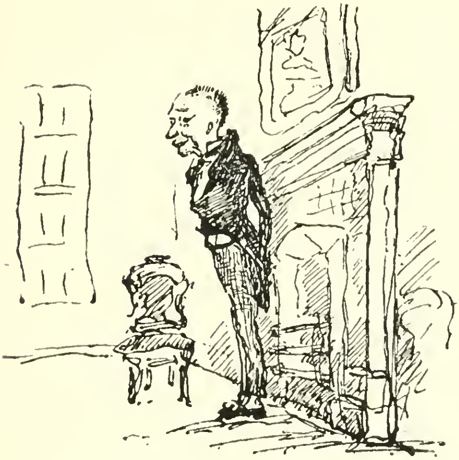
* This suggests, too, another wasteful family of my acquaintance, the head of which declared solemnly: 'I can assure you that we have no intention of settling down to be poor!'

Edmund had an antiquarian wit, and was well flavoured with the old literary humour; witness this superscription of a letter which went duly through the post and was delivered:

'Ffor my worthie ffriend, and worshipfule
'*Maister* and schoolfellow *Percy Fitzgerald*
'*esquier*, a member of y^e *Societie of Antiquaries*
'who dwelleth in hys mansyon at No. 32 Merrion
'Strete, going out of y^e Merrion Square, in
'y^e Citie of Dublin.——
'*These with spede and care.*'

When I was staying at Walton Hall, I made some notes, from which the following extracts are taken:

'When I got out at Wakefield a porter asked if I was going on "t' Squoire's," and said that "t' yong squoire had been in that day." Everybody knew "Squoire Weäterton." He came out to open the door himself. The cab had to draw up when we came to the bridge, as there was no road over it, only a footpath, another oddity of "t' Squoire's." He introduced me in the parlour to his two sisters-in-law, somewhat prim, like characters out of Miss Austen's novels, but they proved very agreeable ladies.



CHARLES WATERTON AT WALTON HALL.

(*A sketch by the author.*)

'The order of living was decidedly uncomfortable, if original. Breakfast was punctually at eight, often by candlelight; dinner at one, with very hot, much-roasted fare. During dinner "Squoire" "picked a bit," and a quaint figure he was; but generally he stood with his back to the fire, which was made to roar and blaze again, as he was always cold. It was imperative that the windows behind the guests should be kept wide open to create a free current of air.

'In the evenings he would relax pleasantly enough, and relate many curious things out of his long life, the "wole" of which—so he pronounced it, for he was genuine "Yorkshire"—was interesting. He is indeed an honest, sincere man, and acts as he thinks, and strictly too. Fancy a man that gets up at three o'clock every morning! This day he showed me his pillow, a little black block of wood, worn smooth by twenty years' use—his bed the floor.

'His son said to me, "You are in favour with my father, as I never saw him come out so as he did to-night," the fact being that I encouraged him by adroit suggestions to talk of what he liked. He set to work spouting snatches of poetry and old ballads, with a memory and feeling that surprised me. He gave them in a sort of quavering tone, yet not undramatic. He was partial to "Admiral Hozier's Ghost." He said, "Now, if ye was to go a-sweethearting and hod a rival, what 'ud ye do now? This ye'd do, wouldn't ye?"—a prelude to the recitation of "Crazy Jane." This he gave with deep feeling, as though grieving over the unhappy Jane.

'There was a local Dr. Hobson who used to call, and whom he liked, and with him he would have good-humoured tiltings and jousts. He showed us a Latin epigram he had made on the doctor, turning on "Hobson's choice," and we amused ourselves turning it into English verse.

'All the processes of life here are uncomfortable. On the Sunday morning, roused at six o'clock by a candle being brought in, we were to drive to chapel at Wakefield. I came tumbling downstairs in the dark, running against the stuffed birds and chimpanzee in the dark. Then into the parlour, where a hasty cup of tea was furnished. But the carriage had not come. Presently we were crossing the bridge; it seemed the middle of the night; and we found at the other side an antique yellow chariot waiting. "Squoire" had started an hour before to walk the whole way, a dark lantern in his hand! We had a long drive to Wakefield, and, returning, passed him trudging along. We took him up, as he was rather fatigued—well he might be—and thus became four in the ancient chariot.

'This is a sweet, original-looking place; a wide curved stretch of placid lake, with an island in the middle planted with tall luxuriant trees. Wild birds of all kinds walking about the lawn, relying on the protection of their "Squoire." "That bird, sir," he said of a strange parti-coloured creature, "that bird is the Egyptian goose." It was at the moment strutting across the gravelled walk. Then an interesting account followed. The Squire had a fine gallery of interesting pictures, which he had bought "for a song," about the time of the great war.

'A prime favourite of the house was the great cat *Whittington*, a name given him by the "Squoire." He was known as *Wheety*. There was somewhat much of Wheety. "Wheety, poor failow! come hear, Wheety." "Squoire" delighted in him, at the same time looking forward with professional ardour to the time when he should have to stuff and make a *chef d'œuvre* of him. I could see he was positively longing to be at him, and, indeed, no one could do such justice to his fine silky coat. "Look at him, sir," he would say; "did ye ever see so marked a cäet!"

'As a great treat in the afternoon, the two Scotch ladies had arranged a sort of expedition to an old summer-house in the garden. A fire was specially lighted, and the thing was treated as a sort of picnic, and we sat round in chairs for an hour and a half conversing. This, again, was like Miss Austen. For the dresses and manners, bearing and speech, were all formal, and of quite a bygone generation. "Squoire," however, fell asleep as he sat, as he was, indeed, well entitled to do. I confess to being three parts asleep myself; that terrible hot roasted dinner—to-day it was brown crackled *pork*—induced drowsiness.

'I have a wonderful admiration for this curious man, and a reverence, too; he is truly one with "man-stuff" in him, and his high principle is shown in the most trifling act. It was rather melancholy to survey his spare figure as he stood at the fire. He was holding forth on the "decay of England," a favourite topic. "It's coming, sir. I can see it coming, sir, as plain as I see yon trees!" He talked of going to *Room*, as he called it. He was at Aix-la-Chapelle a year before; had put up at Frank's Hotel, where I had once stayed. "Jarman music, sir? Peepeepee! Pumpipum pum. Paw paw! That's Jarman music for ye. Ah! if ye had heerd Incledon, in the Stäorm. Ah, sir. Did ye ever see my pamphlet on Ireland? Ellen, fetch my pamphlet on Ireland. There was a vagabond named F—— I dressed him finely!"'

I often met Mr. Waterton at Stonyhurst College during the pleasant Christmas season, where he would arrive to stay for a week. Here he was perfectly at home, and everyone joined in doing him honour. This was natural, for he had been one of the first—if not *the* first—pupils of the establishment, I suppose, some sixty or nearly seventy years before. He often used to expatiate on these early days, and on his old masters, whom he had long outlived. During the day he would occupy his leisure with some great operation on bird or animal, in which science of 'stuffing' he claimed to be supreme, and, I believe, justly. There was a fine, well-appointed theatre in the college, with a regular season of plays, and every night as he descended from the stage to his place, it was the fashion to give him 'an ovation.' He was saluted by the loud shoutings of the two hundred and more scholars.

On one occasion a compliment was paid him in the shape of a drop-scene, which represented his country place, Walton Hall, with the familiar Yorkshire scenery round it. At this, which came as a surprise, descending at the end of the first act, he was much gratified, and he exhibited his pleasure in an odd, old-fashioned way. He had the passion of the 'old school' for classical quotations and allusions, and on the next night he planned this jest: When he appeared on the stage, his little spare figure was hidden under a vast cloak which shrouded his head, and he was all crouched down. He was presumed to be imitating his favourite animal, the monkey. He presently revealed himself, and began uttering in a sort of croak: '*Ridiculus mus! ridiculus mus!*' It may be conceived this was unintelligible to 'the general,' but it was accepted as an exquisite jest, and there were roars of laughter long sustained. No one was so delighted as he was himself, and he often rehearsed it: 'Ye-es, zur; I gave 'em the moontain in labour, and the *ridiculus mus!* Bless ye, they didn't know what to make of it till I showed myself. It made 'em laugh, zur, it did! *Ridiculus mus*, zur.'

I had some pleasant letters from him. Like all persons of 'the old school,' he took letter-writing seriously, and wrote a letter as if he were writing for the press. Here is one specimen :

'I have so much on hand now that I cannot possibly wander from it, so, in answer to F. Johnson's kind invitation to alma mater, I have reluctantly declined accepting it. I am unable to answer your questions about Sterne. I have heard my father say that he used to dance with Lydia Sterne at the York Assemblies, and that the family itself was low in money matters. If those who have written on the works of Sterne had been resident in Spain, and had read attentively what Sancho Panza says of his ass, and how he communed with it, they would have found innumerable beauties in Sterne's "Story of the Dead Ass," which, in my humble opinion, is one of the most pathetic and finest things that ever flowed from his inimitable pen. Had I time, and were I in a proper frame of mind, methinks I could place that pretty story in its proper point of view. Edmund is in London, but on his return I will tell him of your remarks. We are all gaping for news from America.

'Ever truly yours,' etc.

He was at this time preparing a new collection of his essays, and it was surprising to see the care with which he finished them—the writing and re-writing, the reading aloud, and trying, in different forms, different passages. His style was truly fresh, natural, clear and effective, simply because he wrote without any affectation. This sketch, I think, will be read with interest, as it gives a faithful idea of a very remarkable man, who was true and genuine in all things.

CHAPTER IX.

CARDINAL MANNING—GEORGE CRUIKSHANK —THE CROMBIES.

Some of my most favourite recollections are associated with that very gifted, 'high-toned' man, the late Cardinal Manning. There was something singularly 'interesting' about him—that was the proper word. He had all that rare nobility of fine principle, even in trifles, which always impresses. At the Athenæum Club he was very often to be seen, for all associations, lay and clerical, were congenial to him. He found here a faint reflex of the old Oxford life. He would arrive in his little brougham about five o'clock, step out jauntily, arrayed in his comfortable great-coat of a dressing-gown cut, with a hat of a special pattern, very broad brim, but bent down 'fore and aft.' It had nothing of the professional 'shovel,' yet it suited the well-cut, ascetical, sad-toned face that it sheltered. He usually made his way to the library; but it was a slow progress, for he was sure to encounter many an acquaintance. He knew most political and official personages there, with whom he always had a smiling, half-confidential talk; and it was pleasant to note their deferential and cordial bearing towards him. But his chief acquaintance seemed to be among the bishops, deans, canons, and other dignitaries. With some —notably the Bishop of Gloucester—he was on affectionate terms. On a ballot-day he was sure to attend, and there were many who seized the opportunity of being presented to him. His manner was really irresistible on these occasions: there was the old musical tenderness in his voice; and, with his head a little on one side, he held your hand away, at a distance, with a curious grasp, stiff, yet cordial. When he was inclined for 'a read,' he would betake himself to the shelf of new books, and deliberately select what appeared to him most attractive. He would then retire with it to some sheltered corner, his hat well down on his forehead, his glasses 'on,' and so read till he was interrupted or grew tired. He had many intimate conversations with all sorts and conditions of men: he liked a regular talk on the cushioned bench, on the stairs even. He was altogether a most charming man, and really irresistible when he wished to have something done. It was here that I had many a pleasant chat and discussion with him. He was strongly opposed to theatrical amusements, considering them full of dangers. And on this point he would pursue the argument with great good-humour, but with firmness. At last he would say, 'Well, we'll fix a day, and you'll come to my house, and *we'll have it regularly out together.*'

Not long before his death they were painting the huge barrack in which he lived—a 'shivery' place, an 'institution,' rather, with scarcely one comfortable room in it. A large number of men were engaged in the work, which they conducted after the fashion of the British workman—*i.e.*, at their leisure. The owner complained, but the thing dragged on for weeks; no progress was made. More men were then sent in, 'who,' he said, 'only got in each other's way.' At last the Cardinal descended one morning from his eyry at the top—at the very top—and in his tender, quavering notes, his hand outstretched, prophet-like, said solemnly, 'Get away, all of you. *Go out!*' Somewhat appalled, the workmen urged that the work was only half done. It was no matter. 'Go out,' he repeated, 'every one of you, and come back here no more!' They slunk off and went their way, and never returned. Not until after his death was the work resumed.

One night at the Royal Academy soirée I met him as he was going in, when he allowed me to join him in his long promenade round the crowded rooms, and a pleasant one it was. He was glad to have someone to point out the innumerable notabilities and the more remarkable pictures. His talk, it need not be said, was most entertaining. He met a number of friends and acquaintances, old and new, many of whose names he was at least uncertain about—a state of things I suspect common enough with public personages. With many he would pause to have a short colloquy. Few men enjoyed these meetings more; he was pleased to see the good feeling and general respect with which he was regarded. As I said, he was sociable, and delighted in 'a chat' or a discussion, and I shall always regret that I did not oftener avail myself of his many invitations to come and talk with him at his house. By-and-by the delicacy of his chest obliged him to adopt a strict seclusion, and nothing could be more sternly heroic than the fashion in which he would submit to these necessary imprisonments, waiting patiently until 'the fine days' came round, when we would see him at the club again.

'You are a kind and patient author,' he would write, 'and not one of the *genus irritabile;* your MS. has been constantly before me, and I have been resolving to write, but always hindered. But now at last I will read, and write to you again. I like the aim you have.' Again: 'I have read your book, and like it much. It is very intelligible, and will, I think, be read by men of the world who want to know what Macaulay never knew. Yesterday, after a long day, I came home and found your "Tour of One Day," which refreshed me like a sea-breeze. I thank you much for it; but you must have the strength and speed of a steam-engine.' On another occasion he wrote to me: 'Don't think I need any reminder; but come to-morrow before twelve, or next day before one o'clock, that I may thank you for your note, and show, I hope, that my words are not open to what you seem to fear.' I once asked him whether he was related to the Manning who figures in Elia's letters: 'I am sorry that I can throw no light on the question as to Charles Lamb's friend. I remember hearing my father speak of Sergeant Manning as an acquaintance, but as not related to our family. My father's only brother died in youth, and we had no relations of the same name. It is possible the Mr. Manning of Diss, in Norfolk, whom I know only by name, might give you information.'

The Cardinal often talked to me of his father with a sort of fervent, respectful admiration that was very impressive. 'He was the best man I ever knew,' he would say. He would describe a journey he made with him to Nimeguen when he was a boy, and dwelt reverentially on the unwearied pains this excellent man took with him; he seemed to recall many of the useful truths he impressed upon him.

He was seen to great advantage at the gatherings at the Archbishop's House in Carlisle Place, that gaunt, gloomy, barrack-like building, with its vast draughty chambers, the worst of which was his own uncomfortable cell, as it might be called. As the crowd poured in, it passed before that picturesque figure, the ascetic face, with its cavernous eyes and expressive mouth. It was not surprising that the best painters were eager to depict that face, but its delicate lines and expression escaped them altogether; not one of their attempts can be considered quite successful. With such a face a painter had need to be thoroughly familiar to catch the fleeting expression by aid of memory, for the look composed for the painter's purpose is not the natural or habitual one.

Almost next door to his vast mansion—which looked over an expanse of broken waste ground—was a small orphanage, where the children of the Guards' regiments were reared under the care of a Protestant Sisterhood. These little creatures wear a not unpicturesque dress—little scarlet cloaks, like Red Riding-hood's, and lend a colour to the squalid streets of the district. It was curious the sort of neighbourly feeling that sprang up between the amiable, solitary old man, living in his vast barrack, and the little orphan beings opposite. He took an interest in them, had always for them a kindly word or inquiry. He gained their hearts completely by giving them leave to play in the waste ground opposite. Anyone who looked on the curious place, at the poverty-stricken houses, the Soldiers' Hospital close by, the little orphanage with its arcade, and the huge, rather dilapidated edifice in which the aged Cardinal lived, would see something pathetic in this communing between the extreme young and the extreme old. On his jubilee day, not long before his death, a little procession of these children, arrayed in their scarlet cloaks, came over to wish him joy.

One of the most remarkable compliments was the one paid to him by the Jews. Not by Jewish individuals merely, but by the race, represented by their Rabbis and officers, by Dr. Adler and the Rothschilds. On one morning they presented themselves to offer him an affectionate address with a testimonial. This again, when we think of it, was a remarkable and unique scene—the room crowded with the Jews of London, expatiating on the virtues and merits of a Roman Cardinal! He received them with his usual cordiality and kindness, but it was to be noted that he would make no complimentary compromise of his opinions. He was certainly a remarkable man, and prepared for every situation.

The Cardinal had many stories and recollections, which he would tell with pleasant point. Once, when he was preaching in Rome, he recognised John Bright among his listeners. On the instant he determined to preach *at* him, and dwelt with as much force and effect as he could on the claims of the Blessed Virgin to our veneration. Two or three years later he met him, and reminded him of this incident. ‘I remember it perfectly,’ said John; ‘I shall never forget it. I was delighted with everything that morning’—a gratified smile came on the Cardinal's face—‘excepting your sermon.’

I have always thought that the manner of his death was truly heroic, and a valuable contribution to the examples of the time. Therein was exhibited resignation to the inevitable. Therein was the finest display of composed courage. When his canons were gathered round him, he recited the customary declaration, pointing with his finger to the more emphatic passages, repeating them over again, as if it were some judicial act or business. Everything was done with the utmost care and deliberation, and he could speak with much feeling of the situation of the Royal Family, who at that moment were sorely afflicted. Someone at this crisis met his physician, Sir Andrew Clark, who was hurrying off to the North. ‘The best man I ever knew,’ he said. He added, as if a matter of course, 'But I shall travel back all the night, to be with him on the morrow.'

Other Cardinals whom I have known were Wiseman, Manning's successor, Cullen, and Maccabe, and, above all, Cardinal Antonelli. Lately passing through the rather picturesque enclosure, Golden Square, which is hard by Regent Street, gazing at the busy shops and warehouses which now surround it, mostly devoted to trading agencies, I found it difficult to realize that one of these decayed mansions had long been the official residence of Cardinal Wiseman. This shows how rapidly changes take place in London quarters. Many will recall his ponderous figure and large rubicund face. I can see him now at a charitable dinner at Richmond, given at the old Star and Garter, when he spoke, as he always did, judiciously, and with a certain eloquence.

On this occasion a flourishing elderly Irish gentleman proposed the health of the ladies present, garnishing his remarks with many a florid compliment to their 'lovely eyes and peach-like cheeks,' stimulants for us coarse barbarians of the outer world, and 'leadin' us on like *bacon* stars,' etc. A dry and somewhat acrid ecclesiastic who spoke next rather astonished the company, and the florid speaker himself, by his comments. 'I have heard some compliments paid to the other sex—on their eyes and peach-like cheeks, and the rest. *I hate such flummery.* I should praise them for being good mothers, good wives and sisters.' The Irishman laughed good-humouredly, but, I dare say, had his doubts whether these moral praises would after all be as acceptable to the fair as his own.

Cardinal Cullen I knew very well. He was an admirable, conscientious ecclesiastic, hard-working, simple and plain in his manner, and universally respected. His name, 'Paul Cullen,' was almost more familiar than any other in Ireland, from its frequently recurring appearance. The number of religious institutions which he left behind him, having founded them, or helped to found them, was almost incredible—about one hundred and fifty, I think.*

When staying in Rome, I was once taken by my friend Edmund Waterton to call on Cardinal Antonelli, then Secretary of State, and much talked about. We were descending the great staircase of the Vatican, when my friend said carelessly, ' Let us go in and see Antonelli.' He received us with the most agreeable courtesy. He was a striking figure, with his keen, piercing eyes, vellum-like face, but large and rather coarse mouth. Both he and his visitor were passionate antiquaries, curious in gems, rings, and other *antiques.* I remember his going to his cabinet and bringing to the light some bit of *cinque cento* work, over which the two amateurs went into raptures. He was certainly an interesting man. I saw him later at one of the Roman receptions, where he was even more picturesque, set off by his crimson skull-cap, and his finely-shaped leg, in a crimson stocking, of which he seemed not a little proud, and which he exhibited accordingly. He sat surrounded by princesses and other great dames, and seemed to be making himself vastly agreeable. The most effective of all the College at that time was Cardinal Altieri, with his fine, ascetic-looking face, a little swarthy, with soft yet cavernous eyes, and an extraordinary dignity. He was president or patron of an amateur philharmonic society, to which ladies and gentlemen contributed their talents, and I well remember the striking effect of his entrance on the night of one of these concerts.

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* A relation of my own was driving one day in the neighbourhood of Dublin with a pleasant lady, who asked the names of various stately buildings that they passed. They proved to be all Catholic schools, 'retreats,' convents, monasteries, etc. At last she said very naïvely: 'This is really too much. We shall soon not be able to take a drive in the country with any comfort!'

I recollect on one occasion noticing in an 'old bookseller's' shop a rather Jewish-looking old man, somewhat rusty in his dress. When he went away, the owner of the shop said, 'That was Mr. George Cruikshank.' When I was writing an account of the Kemble family, I thought of the old highly-coloured caricatures which depicted the humours of the 'O. P.' riots, and were marked at the corner with his name. Though this troubled incident had occurred some sixty years before, I fancied he might recall something that was interesting, and accordingly applied to him.

'It is rather a curious circumstance,' he wrote to me, 'that I am just now writing a work in which I shall have to allude to the "O. P." riots, and find that I myself must refer to some source for information on the subject. Had I been able to afford you any assistance in this matter, it would have given me much pleasure to have done so. I remember that the great actor John Kemble became (in consequence of his opposition to the wishes of the public) very unpopular at the time, and the managers of Covent Garden found that they had got into a very awkward position when they took the barrister you allude to prisoner. The etchings you mention were principally done by my father.'

Later he wrote to me:

'I have just seen an article of yours in the *Belgravia*, on "The Loves of Famous Men," and in it you mention that "Sterne's Eliza" came to England, and died in 1778, and that her tomb is in Bristol Cathedral. There may be a tomb erected over the remains of *a* Mrs. Draper there, and there may be a tomb in *memory* of the Mrs. Draper who was poor Sterne's last love; but she died at Bombay, and there is a tomb *over her remains there*, of which there can be no mistake, as the words engraved over it are: "Beneath this stone are the Remains of 'Sterne's Eliza.'" And I think this circumstance is mentioned by Sir James Mackintosh; and if so, you will find it in his life, by his son. Thackeray's attack upon Sterne I look upon as a disgraceful affair, which you mention in your article. There is no mention of his ill-treatment of his wife in Sterne's life by Sir Walter Scott, in his Review.'

And now enter a pair of characters rich in comedy, friends of many years, whom I may call the Crombies, brother and sister. He—James Crombie—was a little spare man, with a gnarled Phelps-like face, his cheeks of a pippin tint yet dry, the nose well *retroussé*, also pink at the point, the mouth tightened and sour. He was exactly the grim sarcastic old fellow who comes on in French pieces. I see him walking, peering through his glasses, his stick held out stiff before him, his nose perked up in anticipation of intruding dogs or little street boys, whom he detested.

He was of the old-fashioned school, stiff, short, and angular, with a countenance like one of the walnut-faced comedians in the Garrick Club portraits. In their case, as in his, this was no arbitrary gift of nature, the lines and sinuosities of those delved and dented countenances being produced by processes of thought and intensity of feeling; it is the earnestness within that scores the face. He wanted the old high-collared coat and neckcloth, but made his garments follow these lines as boldly as fashion would allow. He wore a wig; not one of our modern deceptions, artfully simulating natural partings, patches of baldness, etc., but a flat scrubby, scratchy article of a bright bay colour, curled up all round, and seeming to long to display itself in 'pipes.'

There was an individuality about his clothes; they always seemed to be the same garments renewed to a perpetual youth. I suppose they were always rebuilt on the same lines and patterns,—the hat rather limp and without the defiant curl and flourish; the waistcoat short and tight; the rather ill-cut pantaloons skimpy, but of the tint known as *couleur tendre*. There was his brown snuff-coloured coat with the velvet collar, his Malacca walking-stick with a gold top. In this dress he might have come out with the Farrens and Mundens of half a century before, and scolded his disobedient son who would not marry the heiress: 'You dog, I'll disinherit you!'

His voice was sharp and incisive, and, again, had the sarcastic emphasis of those old comedians. Indeed, from him I got a good idea of their method, and of the lost art of making a tolerable, indifferent sentence *tell*. This, I may remark *en passant*, is the secret of acting—the making even a colourless passage express the humour and character of the speaker. Whereas nowadays smart sentences are devised as substitutes for character and humour. I often fancied him hung upon a dining-room wall, a carven frame about him, and in a very blue wooden-cut coat and gilt buttons. He must have been past seventy.

With him lived his sister Bridget—the name will recall the two Elias—and together they made a quaint enough *ménage*. Bridget was matronly, an old maid, as it is called, though with all the airs of having daughters. She comes back upon me now in an antique bonnet, generally open under the chin, the strings hanging limp and loosely. Her dress was always costly, yet each new garment seemed to be a failure. The ordering of a velvet mantle or a black silk dress was a great occasion, a carriage being hired for the operation, undertaken after consultations among many females, and with their personal assistance at the function. It was next to choosing a house.

In these female councils 'James' was her grand precedent and quotation; his deeds, sayings, symptoms even, were her eternal theme. In her eyes he was some radiant Apollo, with youth, health, and strength glowing on his shoulders, instead of the slippered, cranky pantaloon which, comparatively speaking, he was. The odd thing was that they had their constant jarrings—outpost skirmishings—frequently before many guests or visitors, she impassive and aggravating, he tart and aggressive. She knew no compromise, spoke of things as they really were. 'You are too old, James, for that,' she would say. 'You know, James recollects the Regent!' 'Well, if I do,' he would retort, 'I don't want the bellman to give it out to the whole town. My good sister would talk the hind-leg off a horse.'

Another time she would say, placidly, reminding the company, 'You know he' (*i.e.*, James) 'is only the half-blood.' This remark always annoyed him. 'It is well,' he said, 'she doesn't give me the bar sinister at once.' 'No, James; but *you know* you are of the half-blood——' 'Well, what about it? Was there ever——'

They lived together in a handsome house in the suburbs. He had musical tastes of a high order, and could perform on 'the instrument' in the old formal, classical style. The established sacred works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Papa Haydn were all familiar to him, and he executed their masterpieces in a firm, steady style. No catching *him* tripping in time or wrong notes! He was very modest over these accomplishments, and regularly pooh-poohed himself as *rococo* and gone by. 'Who would care to listen to *him?*'

He also used to favour us with 'John Field,' whose symphonies he was fond of, and with Dussek, above all, with his hateful, dreary *ne plus ultra.* This was stiff work for him; but it was impossible not to feel a certain interest in our veteran, as he sat at his piano, his silver spectacles perched on pink-tipped 'turned-up' nose, his head nodding time as he rattled along over the 'broken stones' of the piece. Sometimes he would venture a duet with some fair pianiste, he taking charge of the bass, and never sacrificing duty to gallantry. He insisted imperiously on '*the piece being played as written*,' that is, with the repeats, to the consternation, and even open rebellion, of his companion. It was certainly hard, after wading through some fifteen or twenty pages of an arduous sonata, a fine *largo*, or *allegro con brio*, to find the conscientious old man suddenly whisk back all the twenty pages with a stern, 'Now repeat.'

In the older days it had been always the fashion of the brother and sister to repair to Tunbridge Wells, where, always looking out for the best people, they had made acquaintance with various crabbed and censorious old dames of good degree, Lady Mary This and Lady Olivia That. He loved twanging off on his tongue 'dear Lady'; and when they were settled in their house, on the passage of one of these seraphim—some ancient peer or mouldy dame—a dinner-party was got up, an occasion of solemn state. On these festivals meat, wines, and cooking were of high merit. Our friend appeared in a *grand tenue* modelled on that of the days of the Reform Bill, and suggesting the portrait of Mr. Canning in full dress, high-collared coat, gold eyeglass, and a black riband. The eyeglass was often used to carry out a little fiction. 'What is that yonder?' and he would accept it as a surprise to be told that it was 'sweetbreads.' I was always asked down 'special' on these occasions to help him with the company, and we all had a sort of smiling festival look. I noted that he regularly furbished up his stock of piquant stories, which he contrived to introduce, not by 'the question detached,' but by the ambuscade of some special dish or wine. These anecdotes were of a rather interesting kind, as I shall show presently.

I see him now at the top of the table, his eyes twinkling, his old comedy face like a Ribstone pippin, frosty, yet kindly, with the half-compliment and prepared allusions, dry as his own champagne.

I can hear the quaint story, carefully held over to the fitting moment, and carried with the *vol-au-vent* to the Lady Mary or Lady Olivia of the feast. He would bring it out in his most natural way

With such a face and such a talent, there was no surprise in his having also a dramatic gift. On a rare occasion, after one of these banquets, he would consent to oblige the Lady Mary aforesaid—who 'was dying to see him'—by performing Lord Ogleby or Croaker in Goldsmith's comedy. In the old Tunbridge Wells days he had played one of these characters—it was one of the grand traditions kept green by the worthy Bridget. With awe she would say, 'You should have seen James do Croaker. Lady Mary said she never saw anything like it on the stage.' 'Pooh! pooh!' her brother would interrupt; 'you make the thing ridiculous by over-statement.' 'Well, I heard her say it.' 'Then you heard her say a very foolish thing.'

On such an occasion the present writer was called in to assist as 'Young Marlow,' or as 'juvenile lead.' After dinner he would slip away mysteriously; it was to be a surprise, yet every-one felt that there was something up; then, when all was ready, the faithful Bridget beckoned me (she had been dressing him). 'You are to go to James now,' and presently we re-entered. My friend was adorned and completely disguised in a three-cornered hat, worsted stockings, and the rest. No scenery was needed. We played the couple of scenes in the middle of the room among the company. It was *à la Thespis* wanting the cart. Excellent was his performance. He was the character itself, the old Hardcastle, or Ogleby, or, best of all, Croaker, got in somehow among the ladies and gentlemen. Pleasant nights were those!

Though I was very young, I liked his company and enjoyed his talk, which, like Hardcastle's, was of 'old books, old wine, old people,' etc. There was a solidity, a roundness, in the natures of men of this type, which the seniors of our day have not, and are not likely to have—a weight and impression in every thought or sentence which gave the idea that each had been thought over carefully, and kept in stock. Writing a letter was for him a serious and important thing; he always first made a copy, and corrected and re-corrected.

For many years this intimacy went on. It became an almost regular Sunday's diversion for me to go down, have a walk, and a 'little dinner' afterwards. It was during this walk and dinner that he gave forth a vast number of stories and recollections, most of which I have forgotten. Some of the best, however, I have retained, and shall now introduce to the reader. They are not of much pretension *as* stories, but have an interest. I may say here that most persons of intelligence who go out into society are certain to hear many curious things, bits of family history, good anecdotes, bons-mots, odd gossip, most of which are well worth noting. They amuse when read over.

In presenting these stories, I know that they appear under a disadvantage, as they lack his dry, incisive manner, which imparted a sort of olive flavour, as also the excellent natural air of apropos.

At a party given by one of the Rothschilds the hostess asked one of her guests whether she would like to be presented to Cardinal Wiseman. The lady refused with horror, and further broke into a tirade against 'Popery' and all its works. 'Well, you must forgive me,' said the hostess. 'You see, we are only Jews, and cannot understand how Christians feel in these matters.'

'I have seen old Louis XVIII. eating. It was disgusting! He was *limited* at breakfast to twelve cutlets.—I knew the facetious Chief Baron O'Grady, afterwards Lord Guillamore. When some spendthrift barristers, friends of his, were made Commissioners of Insolvent Debts, he said: "At all events, they can't complain of not being tried by their peers." Another judge used to say, when two of his brethren had differed: "I agree with my brother J., for the reasons given by my brother M."—I have heard Mrs. Siddons read. The effect was rather grotesque. She held her book in one hand, and in the other a large pair of spectacles, which she put on and off continually.'

Lady Morgan described a ridiculously affected excuse for not dining with her sent to her by Grattan: 'He was too much overcome; he had just heard of the death of *Benjamin Constant.*'

When in Paris he was taken to a party to meet Cherubini. It was hoped that the great *maestro* would exhibit, or let others exhibit to him. But his first words were, 'Now place me where I shan't hear a note of music the whole evening,' and placed accordingly he was, and played cards. He was a queer, wizened old man.—Braham told him that he was at a party where Catalini was present, when the Bishop of —— begged to be introduced to her. This was being done with all due solemnity, the Bishop advancing graciously, when Catalini ran forward with a scream of laughter, and seized the Bishop's apron, exclaiming, 'Good heaven! what is dis leetle black ting?' She was a delightful creature, he said, always full of fun and spirits.

Someone gave him a description of Maturin. A nobleman of influence was so delighted with his preaching in Dublin that he went to call on him to offer him an English living. After knocking some time, the door was at last opened by the clergyman in person, who appeared ready dressed for the character of Young Norval in 'Douglas.' The nobleman retired without mentioning his business.

Maturin lived a great deal at a boarding-house at Sea Point, near Dublin, where the elder Mathews used to stay. He was passionately fond of theatricals and dancing, and would get up parties for practice in the daytime, closing the shutters and lighting up the room. (An uncle of my own, an old half-pay officer, was staying there at the time, and, being lame, was appointed to fiddle for the dancers.) Maturin would also organize theatricals. One day he presented himself in the drawing-room in a sort of circus-dress, 'light fleshings,' as they are called. This garb sent the ladies screaming from the room, and put a stop to the gay clergyman's amusements.

When the statue of King William III., in College Green, Dublin, was blown from its horse—I remember going to see it—the effect of the steed standing riderless was curious. My friend said that a wag sent an express to Crampton, the well-known surgeon, to come with all speed, as a person of rank had been thrown from his horse that morning and dreadfully injured.

He knew Sir W. Gell in Rome, who was a dreadful talker. He went round the Roman sights one day with Sir Walter Scott, who was inclined to be most entertaining, but Gell would not let him say a word the whole day.—Two titles in Ireland were gained by smuggling.

'Ries,' he said, 'Beethoven's only pupil, was my master. I once went to Monzani and Hill's, the music-sellers, to get for him some of Beethoven's music, which was wanted for Beethoven himself. They insisted on making the composer pay for his own music! They said, "We charge

Mr. Beethoven just as we do anyone else." Ries then insisted on their filling in a receipt that he might show the composer. Yet these people had made a fortune out of his works! Ries said he did all he could to prevent Beethoven's coming to England, for he knew he could not get on with the people there.'

He described the Bishop of —— at one of Ella's concerts. He slept profoundly all through the music, but at the end complimented Ella. 'It was the finest music he had ever heard.'

'I once brought an introduction to Sir Philip Crampton, the Surgeon-General, from Lady ——, who was much given to laying down the law. He spoke of her kindly. "She considers you, Sir Philip," I said, "the second best physician in Ireland"—he seemed rather taken aback—"for," I went on, "she looks on *herself* as the first."'

'At Rome I was at a dinner-party where were Mezzofanti the linguist, and the ex-Queen of Denmark. She quoted some lines of a Danish poet, when Mezzofanti interrupted, "Are you sure that it runs so?" He then gave the correct version.'

Doherty, Chief Justice of Ireland, was a fellow of infinite zest and humour. Witness his saying of Maturin's preaching, 'I like it better in bottle than in the wood.'

'At Rome I saw a good deal of the Bonapartes. Lucien could not endure the smell of wine, and had to leave the room when a bottle was opened. He professed to tell by the taste of the milk the particular cow on his farm that furnished it.'

'Old Lady F—— was a delightful person for her good common-sense and blunt plainness of speech. She once told me that when she was travelling in Switzerland she arrived at midnight at some small town. The inn was full, and after some hesitation, she was shown into a great "barrack-room," where there was one vacant bed, and also five others occupied by gentlemen, all sound asleep. "If the lady had no objection——" "I had none in the world," she said, "*and five more quiet men I never met in the whole course of my life.*"'

——, who was eccentric and had money to leave, was asked after his cough. '*Which* cough?' he said. 'There is the one I've had these twenty years—that's just the same. If you mean the one I got last week, that's a little better.'

'I was once presented to George IV. at his levée, and as I bowed heard him swearing to himself: "It was d——d stupid of him—d——d stupid." The Chamberlain had omitted something.'

'Tommy Moore told me that he knew the Godwins very well. They were odd, strange people. They would give parties when they were not on terms with each other, and never address each other the whole night. Godwin had a list of his guests over the mantelpiece, and as each arrived he would score out the name with a pen.'

The late Judge Ball used to describe how he had once at Parma dined with Marie Louise, the ex-Empress and widow of Napoleon. He afterwards went with her to her box at the opera to witness a masquerade ball. She appeared much interested, and most curious to find out or guess at the persons who wore masks, saying repeatedly, 'That's so-and-so.' She was also anxious to know from him what the English thought of her. As the Judge had no Court dress with him, he excused himself from attending her; but the Chamberlain wrote back to say that this was of no consequence.

'The old assessed taxes were very oppressive, but often ingeniously evaded. Windows were built up, and rooms kept in complete darkness. A carriage was assessed at £14; a family near us kept one for years under a haystack.'

Doherty, the Chief Justice before alluded to, used to tell how, when posting on his circuit, one of his chaise-horses began to plunge furiously, then ran away. 'Stop, stop!' he called out. 'I really think that horse has never been in harness before!' 'Begorrah, your lordship's right! It's his first time; and the masther says that if he brings your lordship safe to the end of the stage he'll buy him.'

This little sketch of character might perhaps have found a place in some novel, yet it is without exaggeration, and is accurately copied from nature. I have introduced it here to show how in the little world about us the practised observer will always find entertainment and material for his pen. Everyone can see and note for himself characters of the same kind, provided he has formed the habit of such observation; but it requires some practice to seize on the essential points. The regular novelist, we may be certain, finds all his material in what he sees and observes, though he does not reproduce the forms and shapes of what he has observed—nay, even what he has noted may suggest or develop something altogether different. Thus, an odd form of expression may set his invention to work and suggest something yet more odd, but of the same *genre*. As a personal experience is often more interesting than mere generalities, I may mention that I have written some thirty novels, each containing about thirty characters—say a thousand in all—and nearly every one of these has been drawn from life. Nor should I have known where else to seek them. Some of them are minutely finished portraits of real persons, and yet from the situations and forms of speech used they would be found unrecognisable. By an exertion of the imagination they were seen in situations which they never actually occupied, but in which they acted and spoke as the originals would have done.

CHAPTER X.

CONTEMPORARIES.

THE popular idea of collaboration or joint-authorship is that each of the partners shall furnish a distinct portion of the work, much as two masons will raise a wall together. They are assumed to lay out the general plan in concert—the order of events, etc., one supplying one scene, the other another. This would practically be two distinct works fused together. I should be inclined to think that in successful collaboration, whether of play or story, it must be the work of one workman, who gives colour and character to the whole, though assisted by the hints and suggestions of his fellow-worker. Assuming that both are writers of mark and capacity, their distinct styles and methods would otherwise be revealed, and would not harmonize. If, on the other hand, both are writers without style or character, the resulting whole will, of course, be indifferent. There may be, as there is in the case of French dramatists, a mechanical collaboration—one writing one scene, another another; for such things there is a fixed, well-known method, a sort of *technique* which is easily acquired and followed. Then there is the case where two writers are so possessed with the one subject, and so inspired by it, as to have exactly the same feelings and impressions. Such was the case of the well-known, gifted pair, Erckmann-Chatrian, who dealt with what was virtually the one subject—Alsatian life, the wars, etc. But this combination was quite exceptional; for here were two persons of the same cast, with the same passionate, patriotic ardour, the same fashion of viewing things. In England, however, the system has never been in favour, and instances of it are rare.

There is much the same delusion as to the connection between the librettist and the composer. It is usually fancied that the musician—I am speaking of a really inspired musician—does not set to work until the regular story is supplied to him, which he then proceeds to 'set.' But the truth is, the real composer may be said to write his own libretto. The story is either selected by him or suggested to him. It comes to him in the form of musical themes ; it fills his mind. He sees the leading scenes passing before him ; these again inspire him with musical ideas. The whole *tone* of the piece, the very *motifs*, rush on him, and are ready worked out before a line of the libretto is supplied to him. In many cases he suggests to the story-writer what he desires, or requires, to suit his music.

This suggests one of the most successful instances of the system that has been witnessed in our time, that of Besant and Rice. For James Rice, the quondam partner of Besant, I had a great liking—he was a cheery, straightforward man, a Jew, as I suspect. He had run through a fortune in the sporting way, and had now turned to literature. He had bought for a song *Once a Week*, then become a sort of common 'rag,' whose office was at a tumble-down place, a third floor in Fleet Street, with hardly any furniture. I recollect my first visit there, when a queer man—a partner of his—came out drying his hands with a towel. This did not promise well. I began a story in it called 'The Foragers.' Our first interview was grotesque enough, the two men sitting solemnly opposite while I explained the plot of the story. The business partner did not think much of it, and Rice gravely put questions, 'And now that Mrs. Forager, what does she *do?*' as though it were a real person. He wrote himself for the journal a rather feeble story called 'The Mortimers,' which staggered along for some months, also a tale called 'The Cambridge Freshman,' founded on his own reminiscences of college days.

He was, however, determined to get on, and obtained an introduction to the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph.* I met him after this at Sotheby's, where a great sale of books was going on, and was amused at the business-like way in which he fulfilled his new duties. He 'tackled' the head of the firm, note-book in hand, and cross-examined him. I expressed my wonder how he had obtained this post so easily, but he said his introducer was a potentate not to be denied. He soon, however, tired of this drudgery, and, falling in with Mr. Besant, he began their system of collaborating with the story of 'Ready-money Mortiboy,' which appeared in *Once a Week.* This 'caught on,' as it is called, and attracted attention.

He once described to me their method. They were great friends, and used to meet at nights over the fire, and *talk out* their story. Rice was full of suggestions in a general way, though but an indifferent workman. It is plain, of course, from what Besant has written since, that *he* did all the 'writing' and the general details: Rice, no doubt, struck out this and that idea in their discussions.

I often met him afterwards, when he was full of spirit and of plans. He knew how to 'work' the thing perfectly, and made sound contracts in the colonial and American markets. He and Besant went out to the States—were entertained right royally, passed free over all the railways, saw the booksellers, and had altogether great success. These were the palmy days of 'foreign rights,' when a good deal of money was to be made in that way. Rice died rather suddenly, and I was sorry for him.

On Walter Besant, his former partner, the public eye rests as on a thoroughly business-like and efficient personage. His stories, apart from their merits as fictions, are thoroughly workmanlike, their purpose clearly defined; they never fall below or rise above an even level of excellence. The public knows exactly what it has to expect from him, and gets it. He has carried out his movement for the protection of authors and their rights with surprising energy and success, and the 'Authors' Society' is now well recognised. I must confess, however, that the principle seems to me to be a doubtful one, and savours too much of trade unionism.*

A friend of Rice's was Hain Friswell, the author of 'The Gentle Life,' a tall, lanky, gray-headed man, not uninteresting, though a little weak in some directions, but with a fine ideal of what was honourable and loyal. He edited a series of pretty little books, and I prepared for him a selection from Tristram Shandy called 'Uncle Toby.' At one time he issued a series of sketches of literary men of the day, among which was a rather unflattering one of George Augustus Sala, in which he rashly stated that this writer used his pen for advertising purposes, and in writing descriptive pamphlets for great firms.

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* Literary merit, genius, and such qualities, cannot be protected in this way like articles of traffic. Publishers and authors, too, have the one interest, and the market is now so overstocked with writers that the publisher, if he be hampered by rules and demands on the part of his clients, will find plenty to deal with who are more accommodating. Practically such demands and regulations will be waived whenever a writer is really eager to 'see himself in print.' Writers of established reputation can make their own terms, while others who have their reputation still to make will be only too pleased to appear on their publishers' terms. Can we imagine artists forming a society for dealing with the picture-dealers, or actors making a 'union' against the managers?

Friswell, or 'Frizzle,' as some of his friends called him, was sadly distressed by the lawsuit which followed. I recollect a party which he gave at the time in his little house in Great Russell Street, a curious gathering. I noted his amiable, affectionate family, a trusting wife, and a clever daughter with a taste for writing. The poor host had wretched health, and was spitting blood from his throat. On this occasion he had to keep his bed, and I went up to see him. He had a feeble hope that the action might be 'staved off,' if someone could be got to go to Sala and appeal to him. He told me that he had a good case and could justify the libel, but would not do so, as he had done what was wrong in making such an accusation, and would bear the penalties. This seemed chivalrous. I offered to speak to Sala, and actually did broach the matter, but he was determined to go on and make an example of his assailant. That scene in the bedroom comes before me now, the anxious eyes of the faithful family looking wistfully at me, in the hope that this last chance might help them.

While Miss Braddon conducted the *Belgravia Magazine*, her busy, untiring husband looked warily after all the business details, finding contributors, etc. He was assisted by Mr. Charles Cheltnam, a dramatist, one of whose popular pieces succeeded in restoring the fortunes of the Strand Theatre when at a low ebb. I always regarded him with interest, for he was married to one of Leigh Hunt's daughters, the Jacintha who figures so much in the poet's letters.

There is a fine old Georgian house at Richmond, not far from the railway, Lichfield House, where Miss Braddon and her husband reside. Here are good old-fashioned rooms stored with curios; here, in the summer time, I have 'assisted' at pleasant afternoon parties, meeting all sorts and conditions of clever people. There is a long, narrow, old-fashioned garden, or rather walk, behind, with a sort of stone pavilion at the end. Here the guests promenade, quite in the old Walpole style. Richmond, from its antique tone, is assuredly the place for authors to live in. The successful authoress and her husband have also a country place by the New Forest.

Miss Braddon in any library of novels is a sort of 'fixed' quantity. The number and variety of the editions—I believe her novels number seventy —the 'sets' that have to be made up, the demand for the colonies and America, require a regularly-organized firm or business. Miss Braddon, or Mrs. Maxwell, is one of the few novelists who have 'made' largely by their stories. She has written occasionally for the stage. Many years ago I witnessed a serious attempt of hers to win popularity in this way. It was a poetical drama on the subject of the 'Patient Griselda,' treated after the fashion of Tennyson's 'Falcon.' It was played at the Princess's, then under the management of Mr. Gooch. It was an attractive, interesting thing, but too delicate and finely spun for the Oxford Street lieges.

Her first successful venture was 'Lady Audley's Secret' (1862), which also brought good fortune to its publishers, the then new firm of Tinsley Brothers. So popular was the story of the golden-haired murderess, that in a few months it passed through eight three-volume editions. The firm, thus successfully started, continued for many years to prosper. The business was later exclusively conducted by my old friend William Tinsley, who some years ago began to write his own memoirs, and printed a few portions in a magazine. They were written in a natural, simple style, and contained some curious scenes and incidents.

A pleasant book, or, at least, a portion of a pleasant book, might be written on the history of famous novels. 'Lady Audley's Secret,' which appeared thirty years ago, would be a dramatic instance. That stirring tale was the first stroke of the pickaxe that laid bare the rich and profitable vein that was below. Excellent as the story is, it is certain that its merit alone will not account for its phenomenal success. This was due rather to its hitting the humour or mood of the moment. A year earlier or later, and it might have fallen still born. The sagacious writer, with a reputation to maintain, will study his public, and carefully follow its changing moods; otherwise, as with the author of 'The House on the Marsh,' the first success may prove the last. Mr. Tinsley, the publisher, tells us that, 'if ever a book had a good chance of being damned at the start,' it was this. It started in a short-lived periodical, *Robin*

Goodfellow, directed by Charles Mackay, when it was cut short with the paper, then started afresh in a sixpenny magazine. Later there was some hesitation whether it should be issued in orthodox three-volume form, or as a cheap two-shilling book, with highly-coloured covers, also orthodox at the time. 'Lady Audley' and 'Aurora Floyd,' Tinsley tells us, were offered to him for a not very large sum, and he has often looked back with all a publisher's anguish to his hesitation and final refusal. He originally took only the first, but had later to pay, on the sibylline principle, £2,000 for both.

It is difficult to realize the excitement that was produced by these two books, they were so natural, so everyday-like, and yet so dramatic. Our authoress has no inequalities, her work is always up to the same level, the dialogue lively, and the incidents interesting. Lady Audley's mansion, with its well, was, as it might be expected, sought to be identified, and various gloomy abodes in the country were named. Not long ago she sent me this interesting letter on the point in question :

'Well there never *was*, save in the novelist's imagination ! The murderous element in the landscape had to be supplied from the "scene-dock" of fiction. But there was a long, narrow avenue of tall limes, very quiet, very secluded, and aloof from the garden of a dear old oak-panelled grange in Essex, and it seemed to me one summer evening, walking with the master of the house, that this lime-walk suggested something uncanny in the history of domestic crime. So I said to my host, "If I were to take this house of yours as the scene of a novel, would you mind very much if I made the inhabitants a rather bad set of people?" "Mind! People it with fiends if you like, my dear!" said he. Now, that is a verbatim report of a brief question and answer spoken thirty years ago. The story was begun soon afterwards, and I think when it had become widely known as a story, my kind old friend took a fanciful pleasure in identifying his handsome head and patriarchal white beard with the Sir Michael Audley of my first three-volume novel. Many years afterwards, when the house had passed into other hands, my valued friend Mr. Edward Duncan, the well-known water-colour painter, sat for some hours on a rainy evening under the arched gate, in order to gratify me with a sketch of Audley Court.' A picturesque, vivacious sketch, which many will be glad to associate with a work which has given all such entertainment. It is pleasant always to meet Miss Braddon ; few people have warmer friends.

It is only after a long interval that we realize the almost dramatic nature of some of the odd characters that flit across the literary scene. It seems to me that the figures of a generation ago had more eccentricity, and possibly more enthusiasm, than is to be found nowadays. Forgotten almost now is J. Payne Collier, with his fierce controversies and startling Shakespearian 'discoveries,' his wonderful 'Folio,' with its 'corrector' and profuse marginal notes. This daring and elaborate 'discovery' was exposed in the most convincing way by an official of the Museum, whose pamphlet makes amusing reading. He showed that the admirably-imitated 'old writing' was written in sepia, and a magnifying-glass brought out the pencilled characters written underneath. As Payne Collier was a fierce and sturdy controversialist, this became a very 'pretty quarrel' indeed, the Shakespearians hitting about them savagely enough. It is curious, by the way, how, in the case of such tempestuous persons, character peeps out even in a trifle. One day Mr. Forster showed me a little volume he had just received. It was Payne Collier's 'Diary,' which he had printed to give to his friends. It was full of curious things, anecdotes, etc., and necessarily stretched back a long way. I took it away to read, and being struck by something in it about Mrs. Siddons, whose life I was engaged upon, I wrote to the author for leave to make use of it. 'I did not expect to be asked what you have requested,' he wrote, 'any more than I should have expected to see the contents of one of my letters in print. I have no doubt that you will use the matter properly, but my wish, of course, was not to have it used at all. If you had mentioned the name of your "friend" upon whose table you saw my "Diary," I must have recognised it immediately; but I purposely excluded several known writers to whom I might have sent it, because I did not want to expose them to the difficulty of having it and not using it. If you think it worth while to print anything from it, I feel sure that you will do so unobjectionably, and without the use of my name. I only put the matter together for my own amusement and that of my friends, and I was anxious altogether to avoid publicity.

I am so still. I heartily wish you success with your book, which is certainly wanted.'

This seems a curious letter, and, as I said, is highly illustrative of character, showing various feelings contending with each other—vexation, good-nature, half-satisfaction, to say nothing of the sly hit at the 'friend' whose name he would like to have known, but which I took good care not to tell. The conflict between two such paladins of controversy would have been alarming. He later wrote that I was 'quite welcome to the song. I have another, said to be by Mrs. Siddons, somewhere among my papers, and if I meet with it, I will send it to you. It is a poor thing.' This was really good-natured.

A clever man with whom I had some slight acquaintance was Mr. George Godwin. He had a curious and quite unique hobby—the collecting of 'celebrated chairs,' chairs that belonged to eminent men, their favourite chairs, in fact. This was a rather expensive fancy, and difficult to gratify withal, as such curios are by no means common. He managed, however, to secure nearly a score, I suppose, of these mementos—Dr. Johnson's, Dickens', Hook's, and others. It is impossible to look on such relics without interest; they seem so associated with the daily life of the owners. They have generally a sort of quaint expression of their own, Johnson's particularly, which I have seen, with its 'spider' legs, oval back, and lean but strong arms. At Godwin's death these treasures were sold by auction, and, alas for the collectors! fetched but insignificant prices—£2 to £4 apiece.

A very prolific writer, whom I knew in his later days, was Dr. Madden, author of an account of 'The United Irishmen.' He was a grave, slow-speaking man, and elderly. But I always regarded him with a curious feeling, knowing that he had been the physician of the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope in her Eastern solitude. Her conversations he had described in a book of travels, written very many years before, and long since forgotten. He had been one of the Gore House coterie, and an intimate friend of the Blessingtons. He used to relate the odd incident of D'Orsay's quarrel with the young Charles Mathews. He bore a challenge or demand for apology from Mathews, and succeeded in arranging the matter. He wrote a quantity of books on all sorts of subjects, notably a 'Life of Savonarola,' for which he had made a collection of rare Italian tracts and other works. He also furnished a 'Life of Lady Blessington,' a rather ill-digested mass of materials, put together with little order or coherence, but, still, containing many curious anecdotes. He had, indeed, met in his long career all sorts and conditions of interesting men and women, and had something to tell about each.

A novelist at one time in high favour with the public was Marmion Savage, who wrote two brilliant novels, 'The Falcon Family' and 'The Bachelor of the Albany.' These were studies of character on a small scale, being in one volume, but very highly finished, and abounding in pleasant humour. As is well known, the hero of the first was drawn from the father of the present patriot, John Dillon. He was a rather grave man, like most of his Irish countrymen who have written humorous stories, and elaborately courteous in his manner.

Once when staying at Hastings, I became acquainted with that interesting man, Coventry Patmore, one of the few writers who are original both in manner and matter. He lived in a fine old high-roofed Georgian mansion by the roadside, with a good garden behind it. His life was a rather secluded one. I dined with him, when we had an agreeable party, among the guests being Mr. Bridges, the poet, and Mr. Basil Champneys, the architect, who had built the Catholic chapel over the way. This, I believe, is the only instance in England of a Protestant architect having designed and built a chapel of the Old Faith.

Coventry Patmore attracts by a certain originality of thought and his very finished style. His little prose essays, mostly published in the *St. James's Gazette*, I remember always excited attention, though I did not then know their author: they contained thoughts of a striking kind, and their style was highly polished. Many years before I had been singularly impressed by a single stanza in an evening paper, beginning:

IF I WERE DEAD.

If I were dead, you'd sometimes say, Poor child!
The dear lips quivered as they spake,
    And the tears brake
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.
    Poor child! poor child!

I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song :
It is not true that love will do no wrong.
Poor child !
And did you think, when you so cried and smiled,
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,
And of these words your full avenger make ?
Poor child ! poor child !

There is a deep passion and pathos in this wail. I wondered who was the author, and was lately gratified at finding them in his collected writings.

This mention of the poet suggests to me Alice Meynell, a gifted woman of the same mental type, whose writings have a similar delicacy. As is well known, she is the sister of Lady Butler, the artist. Her mother was Miss Weller, one of the early 'flames' of Dickens. This has always seemed to me one of the oddest coincidences in the world, for Pickwick had appeared some time before they had met. The 'beautiful Miss Weller' in connection with Dickens sounds not unnatural. She was an excellent musician, and there are extant some versicles addressed to her by the novelist.

Mrs. Meynell is a charmingly original poetess, and also an accomplished art-critic, of graceful style and of ideas that *donnent à penser.* There is a sonnet of hers of extraordinary merit which, once heard, lingers in the memory. I remember seeing this casually copied in a newspaper, and its melody haunted me for days. I have since shown it to many competent critics, and I have invariably found the effect to be the same, that of having heard something strangely striking.

Lately walking from Highgate, I met my old friend, that excellent critic, Joseph Knight, who was reciting sonnets of various writers, notably the famous one of Blanco White's, when I said to him, 'I will give you one that for its picturesque original thought far excels it.' I sent him this one of Alice Meynell's, which, after such a preface, readers not already familiar with it will surely be glad to meet with here :

RENOUNCEMENT.

I must not think of thee. and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight—
The love of thee—and in the blue heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song,
Oh, just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright ;
But it must never, never come in sight ;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

'Your friend's sonnet is exquisite! I cannot tell you how I admire it!' wrote my friend, who is by no means an enthusiast. Mr. Ruskin has said that he thinks it 'the finest sonnet ever written by a woman,' and Coventry Patmore, who has thus suggested Mrs. Meynell's name to me, I believe holds the same opinion.

It is curious to note how society has changed its character, how the wits now do not form an element—a small *recherché* element it used to be—in fashionable coteries. This may be owing to the influence of gross wealth and luxury, which has blunted the appreciation of such things. What dame of high fashion would now think her dinner-party incomplete without her Dr. Quin or Mr. Hayward? This is since the rise of the 'Beerage.'

Hayward was a great potentate in this line, a skilled and polished writer, a man of the world, and an eager follower of influential and important persons. He was a dry, acid-looking little man of extraordinary industry and powers of investigation ; he knew and had thoroughly swept out all the little corners and cupboards where scraps of curious gossip and history might be lying. He had really a finished taste in such pursuit, and was a polished workman. With this he joined, as I have said, a craving for the best society, home and foreign.

I once saw him doing the honours of the club to a French nobleman, the Duc de Broglie. His French seemed correct enough—I suppose as correct as Dr. Johnson's would have been — and withal was fluent ; but I have rarely heard anything more excruciating in the way of *Anglo* pronunciation. At Strawberry Hill he was supreme, and it was noticed the list of guests always terminated with 'Mr. Hayward, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, and — Dr. Quin.'

He loved his whist. Every Sunday found him at the Athenæum Club. There was the table in the left-hand corner where the same party of friends always dined together. I once met him at dinner at an old friend's—the ever-genial Lord O'Hagan's—at whose hospitable board you were sure to meet abundant notabilities. This amiable man had been Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the friend of O'Connell, was a famous advocate in his own country, and, indeed, had been one of those fortunate beings who throughout their course find success waiting them at every turn. Not the least of his successes had been his second marriage. On this occasion I was rashly tempted to tell a 'little anecdote,' which turned out to be one of Hayward's own special *patented* stories; and in a rather acrid manner he reclaimed his property, and gave the exact version. His theory was that every element in a proper story should be essential—it should be, as he put it, 'cut to the bone.'

At one time I knew that most charming of women, the late Lady Dufferin, afterwards Lady Gifford, and her still more gifted sister, Mrs. Norton. Lady Dufferin had an extraordinary sweetness and gentle placidity of manner; she seemed to breathe a sort of tender goodwill to all the world. In her letters there was a kind of half-melancholy, as of one who had suffered much. There was much elegance about her too. Mrs.

Norton was more vivacious, and had a delightful airy tone of light satire in her talk. I used occasionally to find my way to her pleasant house in Chesterfield Street. She always seemed to be on the eve of setting out on some long journey to Naples to see her half-Italian grandchildren, who were generally ill. She was most devoted to her family. When she was *en grande tenue*, nothing could be grander than her classical head and masses of fine hair. There was a suggestion of Grisi ; but in her latter days she seemed to grow careless, and her tresses, tinged with gray, were but roughly confined. I wish I could recall some of her smart, lively sayings and elegant persiflage. She was always fond of this half-ironical strain.

One of her favourite projects, for many years discussed and talked of, but without any attempt at a beginning—and this is usually the fate of such ambitious schemes — was the life of her famous grandfather, Richard Brinsley. It was too vast a business for her resources. I had long had the same plan in view, but without any serious notion of undertaking it, and once I received from her a sort of burlesque message, threatening me with the vengeance of an aggrieved woman if I dared to interfere with her pet project. It need not be said that she was reassured on this point, nor was I so rash as to think of competing with so gifted a person. Years after her death, however, I was able to carry out the scheme.

I knew that amiable, interesting man, the late Archbishop Trench. It has been truly said that 'all the Trenches'—and they are numerous—'are attractive people.' The Archbishop and his family had a singular charm from their simple, sincere manners, combined with cleverness. As Dean of Westminster, in the monastic seclusion of Dean's Yard, under the shadow of the Abbey, he enjoyed an enviable position—troops of friends, lettered ease, and certain prospects at no remote period of a bishopric.*

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* This enclosure has always a romantic air of seclusion. On some winter's night you may pass from the hum and clatter of the busy street, under the arch, and find yourself in a complete calm. It might be the close of some far-off cathedral town. On a calm winter's evening when the lamps are lit, and you are hurrying to dine with one of the canons, the illusion is still more complete. The great towers are seen looming in the shadow. Big Ben has a muffled tone. There is a pleasant colony here who live in a sort of rural tranquillity. On the left is the picturesque Deanery, beside it the opening

Under pressure, however, he consented to accept the Archbishopric of Dublin, then a splendid, well-endowed post. He was a gentle, amiable man, unsuited for the strifes and factions which he found awaiting him. His 'views' were strongly High Church, of the good old pattern, and in the presence of the rough and robust Low Church element his position became at once constrained and even painful. I dined with him once at his fine palace, on St. Stephen's Green, and could see that he and his amiable family were harassed and disquieted.

He was a strange contrast to his predecessor, Archbishop Whately, who, with all his undoubted gifts and talents, was a rather uncongenial being, hard in style and manner, and cynical as to the character and feelings of the people among whom he lived. He looked on them very much as Swift did, and, supercilious and haughty, regarded his position as one of banishment. Some jest of his was constantly in circulation, with some riddles really jocose, but not of a very dignified character.

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at the archway leading into the cloisters, the school adjoining, and the charming Ashburnham House—the old canons' residence; while the antique College Street faces the venerable wall of the gardens.

I have often seen him walking solitary in Stephen's Green before his palace.

At that time there was in Dublin a little society under the name of 'The Afternoon Lectures,' the object of which was to give lectures occasionally, at which ladies and gentlemen might attend, at the convenient hour of three o'clock. They were very successful. Application was made to various distinguished men in the kingdom, who in most instances very readily consented to give their services. Among these, to our surprise, was Mr. Ruskin, who was not in the habit of lecturing at that time, but who, with great complaisance, agreed to perform. As may be imagined, the event was looked forward to with much interest, and the theatre was thronged.

Ruskin was then in the full powers of his great intellect, or genius, it may be; he was active and animated, and had not yet hidden his marked, expressive mouth in his present prophet-like beard. He had just made a new departure in his speculations, and had taken up, as though they were novelties, those common theories of duty, work, and self-denial which, however admirable, have been expressed with far more effect from the pulpit or by professors of morals. To the astonishment of the audience, who had come expecting charming thoughts and fancies on art, painting, architecture and the like, the lecturer gave a sort of sermon, and expatiated largely on selfishness, self-indulgence, and such topics. He read from his notes very distinctly, but at intervals would regularly kindle with his theme, then deliberately quit his desk and make his way to the front of the platform, when he would indulge in a vehement burst of eloquence, stigmatizing the follies of the time, and the grossness of the age in impromptu phrases, until he had, as it were, 'run down,' when he would quietly return to his place and resume his reading. This process was repeated many times over. The audience received him cordially, though a little bewildered, and perhaps disappointed.

He was on a visit at the time to some old friends whom he highly esteemed. Some afternoon parties were got up in his honour, at which he showed himself in a most agreeable way, talking to everyone. I recall a pleasant conversation I had with him. At this time a 'note' of his dress, and a not inartistic one, was a favourite blue *foncé* tie, a bit of colour which suited his slightly old-fashioned costume.

Not long ago, when at Sheffield, I wandered out to look at the Ruskin Museum there, which is in an old-fashioned, mellow brick manor-house in the suburbs. It left an extraordinary impression of bewilderment as to its purpose. Here, disposed in many rooms, were all sorts of what may, without disrespect, be termed 'odds and ends': in one cabinet a collection of bits of undressed marble, gems, and coloured stones, selected, I believe, for the object of educating the eye in colour. On shelves were fragments of old stone carvings, and on the walls pictures of St. Mark's, at Venice, by some artists quite unknown to fame, but in which there was some special hidden charm known probably only to the donor of the museum. There were, of course, the famous Turner water-colour drawings. No doubt—indeed it was certain—these things possessed the value and interest claimed for them, for was there not here a master in art, whose writings had influenced the whole generation, and who *must* know, if anyone knew? but, still, it was difficult, if not impossible, to pierce to the secret, to the hidden beauties, and to the mysterious teaching. The only method of illumination would have been, I fancy, the professor's own teaching and exposition. I could imagine him taking round a party and expounding as he went.

There are few families in whom there is found so general a gift of succeeding in the world as that of the Pollocks. Among them we find distinguished judges, lawyers, soldiers, Indian administrators, literary men, poets, editors. Not many years before the death of Chief Baron Pollock, when I was collecting some curious cases of murder-trials, etc., for Mr. Dickens's journal, I had a correspondence with the Chief Baron on the subject, and he was good enough to take great interest in the matter.

'I am not very familiar,' he wrote, 'with your doings in the *murderous* way, and do not know whether you have told the story of Müller, who was sent from America to be hanged in England in 1864, for a murder now almost forgotten, but which created more sensation at the time than any that I can remember. It was speedily followed by another, by one Kohl, in imitation of the former, carefully avoiding the points which led to conviction in the first, but (as of course) falling into other blunders equally fatal; it is a case of one murder causing another by imitation, so clear and certain that they are worth looking at from that point of view. You must forgive my troubling you, but I have the highest esteem for Charles Dickens, personally and as an author, and would do anything to assist him or anyone associated with him. I tried both these cases. Thousands of readers have come into existence since then; no doubt millions remember them in all the papers, but I have never seen their connection—the one being a sequence to the other—remarked before. I think they are too recent for you to have meddled with them, but they would now make an interesting article.'

This shows how such things will strike a clever man, and how, also, the literary or 'writing' element operates as a sort of 'open sesame' in eliciting such agreeable comments. Some time later the Chief Baron was good enough to draw up an account of one or two curious cases of circumstantial evidence, the names of which I have now forgotten.*

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* Many years later, when he was in his decay, and thought to be lingering over-long on the Bench, I witnessed an amusing little episode in his court. A brisk, somewhat impatient

His son, Sir Frederick Pollock, I knew very well. He was a singularly amiable, good-natured

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counsel, whom I shall call Mr. Potter, Q.C., was examining a witness, and his questions were much objected to: the Chief Baron, then feeble, was constantly interposing in a slow, deliberate fashion, most carefully, and at enormous length, expounding his reasons for the interruptions. Here was the dialogue:

Opposite Counsel: I object to my learned friend's asking the witness this question.

Mr. Potter: Very well, very well; I won't press it. Let us get on.

Chief Baron: *But*—Mr. Potter, I think the question is wholly incorrect, on these grounds. You see, if you would put it in another form——

Mr. Potter: I am *not* putting it at all, my lord. Let us go on with the case.

Chief Baron: *But*, I would not have you take it, Mr. Potter, that I do *not* allow the question; because under the Act of Parliament, and if put in another form——

Mr. Potter (*impatiently*): Quite right, my lord, quite so; I withdraw it. Now let us go on. (*To witness:*) Where were you on the 25th?

Chief Baron (*very slowly*): Because, Mr. Potter, under the Common Law Procedure Act, a witness is more or less protected by the——

Mr. Potter (*turning round to his friends*): Dear, dear! Will he never have done? I've a case in the next court.

Chief Baron: So, Mr. Potter, you will not *take* me as laying it down that——

Mr. Potter: I do *not*, my lord. *Now* let us go on.

Chief Baron: Still, Mr. Potter, if you insist on pressing the point——

man, of the most placid manners, with a little touch of the old-fashioned dignity always welcome in these brusque days. It was impossible not to like him. He was Queen's Remembrancer, and took great pleasure and pride in his office, which he was careful to invest with all its state and importance. Every year he religiously carried out the quaint old ceremony of 'The Trial of the Pyx'—the assay of the coins at the Mint, at which he presided, when, after the regular solemnities, he found that they were 'true.' He was a cultured, accomplished man. He had, like many others, translated Dante, was a poet, and also drew up his own 'Memoirs and Recollections,' which are agreeable reading, and contain not a few good stories. He had been the friend of many remarkable men, of whom he had a good deal to tell. I well remember the good-natured way in which, when I had to deliver a lecture on 'Scenic Art' at the Society of Arts, he, at my request, contributed to the enlivenment of the evening a very pleasant, sensible speech, full of sound criticism. It was on this occasion that a grave, matter-of-

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MR. POTTER: Not at all, my lord; I give it up, I withdraw it. (*Turning round to his friends:*) Oh, this old man will be the death of me!

fact person in the audience stood up to object that I had passed over a very important department of 'scenic effect,' viz., the sanitary arrangements behind the scenes. The proper persons to consider such an objection would have been Messrs. Doulton, of Lambeth.

Sir Frederick was fond of the stage and of theatres, and was a good critic. Having been an old friend of Macready, the diaries and papers of the actor were put into his hands to be prepared for publication—a task which he accomplished in a satisfactory way, though somewhat too modestly. We should have welcomed his own recollections and experiences of the great tragedian.*

He was fond of the company of actors, and particularly of those in the French comedy—Mounet Sully, Delaunay, Febvre, and the great Sarah herself. With him and his son, Walter Pollock, I once made a delightful Sunday excursion on the top of a coach down to Dorking. This was a little fête given by Irving to some of his French confrères—notably Delaunay, Mounet Sully, and a few more. It was a most enjoyable day, and though the French party knew no English, and many of the English no French, good-will and good-nature on all sides supplied a very intelligible language. I need not say that on this occasion the host was at his best, and left on his foreign guests the impression that he was '*un parfait gentleman.*'

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* I remember that, at the time his book came out, we met at a dinner-party given by Irving at the Garrick Club to a small party of friends. A guest awkwardly began to criticise the book, quite unconscious that its editor was listening to him, but Sir Frederick passed it off very good-humouredly.

His son, my friend Walter Herries Pollock, has also many gifts. He is a pleasing poet, and a popular one too; a dramatist; a well-read French scholar, writing in that tongue both in prose and verse; a lecturer,* and a good actor. He has long been editor of the *Saturday Review*.

Yet another instance of a whole family of clever persons is presented by the Doyles, the father, four sons, and the grandson, all being remarkable for artistic gifts. The father was the well-known 'H. B.,' who for many years in his single person embodied the entire *Punch* of his day, and was ever ready with some witty or humorous caricature of the political incident of the moment. Each of his drawings was an artistic memorial sketched with much delicacy, spirit, grace, and finish. The situation was always comic and intelligible, though the drawings were rather disfigured by the written speeches represented as issuing from the mouths of the characters This fashion was inherited from the Gilrays and Cruikshanks of the preceding generation, whose vividly coloured etchings were seen in every print-shop window. In spite of Tenniel's firm and admirable drawings, the cartoon in *Punch* has always seemed to be the weak place in that lively periodical, so elementary seems the design, the British lion and Britannia herself being constantly introduced.

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* I would refer the reader to some striking little scenes in French which he contributed to a recent number of the *National Review*, and which have been recently issued in a small volume. Their local colour is remarkable; they recur to the memory with an Ibsen-like flavour.

The 'H. B.' drawings fill many volumes, the turning over of which offers extraordinary entertainment. The peculiarity of their form and size makes us speculate how they were bought and brought home or delivered to customers. Were they rolled up, or what did the purchaser, after he had looked at and laughed over them, do with them ?

His gifted son Richard, the well-known

'Dicky,' inherited his delicate humorous power, with much more besides. Not sufficient credit, surely, has been given to this versatile and exquisitely humorous artist, who distinguished himself by the most delightfully fanciful exercises of his pencil. The front page of *Punch*, familiar as it is, exhibits his peculiar power in an extraordinary degree, and would furnish a good quarter of an hour's entertainment. Witness the grotesque procession of Bacchus, which is full of the most delicate humour. The whole air seems full of fluttering fancies, tiny sprites hovering about; even the Dicky bird, his own emblem, has a sort of pert life and character.

In his day there was no photographic 'process' for reducing large drawings into what seem delicate miniatures. Doyle could draw on the very smallest scale with accuracy and firmness. Who will forget his 'Pip's Diary' and 'Brown, Jones and Robinson,' which I have found quoted by Bismarck himself? He could boast that he had illustrated Dickens, Thackeray, and Ruskin. He made a fine contribution to the public stock of high principle and honour when he sacrificed a large income, the pleasantest of occupations, and much social intercourse, to his feeling of religious duty.

In his latter days he was constantly to be found at the Athenæum, where he had many friends. He was a quiet, reserved man, having rather the air of a man of business.* He seemed to enjoy his Sunday evening there, looking forward, like so many of its older members, to a *tête-à-tête* dinner once a week with a special friend. He was one of those who make a hearty dinner, as it is called, and care little for eating at other times of the day. This injudicious practice, I believe, led to his sudden and rather tragic death. It was after one of these hearty meals that he was stricken in the hall of the club with a fit of apoplexy, was carried into one of the rooms, and died in a short time.

Another remarkable member of the family was his brother Henry, who was a good artist also, and a fine judge of pictures. At one time he painted portraits with some success. But what he most excelled in was in getting on in the world, as it is called, in making friends, and in knowing people of every degree. I confess I often looked with envy on the wonderful gift he had in this way; he literally knew everybody that was worth knowing, and without trouble or effort managed to impress every company into which he entered. He at once took his place. Give him only a quarter of an hour in a room full of persons, all strangers to him, and he was not only perfectly at home, but one of the most considered persons there.

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* As might be expected, he had much pleasant humour, and could thoroughly appreciate grotesque turns of character. His stories, which were well told, usually illustrated something of the kind, as when a friend of his, a well-known *littérateur*, was expatiating on some picturesque scenery: 'And see, Doyle,' he said, 'what an effect in that purple cloud behind the trees!' 'My good friend,' said he, 'that's not a cloud; it's a bit of slated roof.' The other was silent, but presently said: 'See, Doyle, that's *not* a cloud, but a bit of slated roof.' Here was an amusing delusion that he, the speaker, was correcting a mistake, instead of being himself corrected.

This art was owing to an absence of affectation, and to his good-nature and easy manners. Wherever he went the same success attended him, and it is a creditable thing to succeed as much as possible in whatever you attempt. When he went to Homburg in the season, it was no surprise to his friends to learn that he was on easy terms with all the royal personages who frequented the place. Nor was there anything obsequious in his methods; on the contrary, he was rather independent in his views, and said boldly what he thought.

Through his friends he had obtained the post of Director of the National Gallery at Dublin, an office which he made of an importance it never had before, not merely by his singular ability, but by his own personal pre-eminence. He affected all the noted critics much as he did his personal friends in social circles, and at the great sales at 'Christie's' his presence was always noted by the newspaper reports, his modest purchases duly chronicled, These were made with a rare tact and judiciousness, and, with the small sums placed at his disposal, he always contrived to pick up some excellent over-looked picture. A good deal, too, was owing to his admirable tact and judgment, and he would be assisted by his friends, the managers of the greater galleries, who were glad to put a good thing in his way. The result was that he made his gallery a very remarkable and pleasing collection. By the time of his death he had gathered a vast experience, and I think if he had lived to the present time he would certainly have succeeded Sir F. Burton at Trafalgar Square.

His vast acquaintance made him an agreeable companion. I had known him for many years, and found him a good friend. Once, at a Dublin exhibition, he was appointed to collect a gallery of Irish portraits from every quarter—a duty for which he was peculiarly fitted ; from his personal relations with the owners he could obtain loans that no one else could. He brought together a very curious and interesting collection. I was joined with him in the preparation of a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the portraits, an equally pleasant task, having to collect all the gossip, etc., associated with each. From his criticisms of the portraits I saw how admirable his judgment was. He had, of course, his foibles, which were merely those of the professional ‘society-man.’

I also knew very well his brother, James Doyle, an amiable, retiring man, a good artist, and a ‘dungeon of knowledge’ in his special department, heraldry, history, etc. His monumental volume, a sort of chronicle of English history, was a peculiar triumph of workmanship, from its profound knowledge, as well as the elegant coloured miniatures — accurate in costume and every detail—with which it was adorned. The success of this encouraged him to attempt a really gigantic work, a sort of heraldic panorama, giving an account of distinguished persons, with the offices they had held, their arms, specimens of their handwriting, portraits, etc.

The herculean labour thus entailed may be easily conceived. And he carried it through in the most conscientious fashion. He had an heroic confidence in its perfect success, as, indeed, the scheme well justified ; but I am afraid it did not quite come up to his anticipations. Often during the progress of the work he would tell me how he was getting on, and show me his beautiful little drawings. He was a most religious, upright, honourable man. His handwriting to the last was exquisite, surpassing even Mr. Sala's beautiful penmanship. Not long before his death, when I was preparing a short account of his brother, I consulted him on the matter, and received from him a pleasant, hopeful letter.

A fourth brother is Charles, an artist also, who has done a good deal of work in book-illustrating. His son is Dr. Conan Doyle, so celebrated for his novels, the creator of the rather overrated 'Sherlock Holmes,' which has hit the taste, perhaps beyond the writer's expectation, of an ever-capricious public. To me this detective seems but a small creature, and his wonderful processes exact a certain imbecility in those who are opposed to him. But the admiring public, it seems, cannot have too much of their 'Sherlock Holmes.'

I knew a little of Dr. Doran, and have dined in his company. The class of books he wrote had a great reputation, such as 'Monarchs Retired from Business,' and the rest. It was fancied at the time, so novel was the idea to the public, that these were the result of great learning and infinite research. There were others, too, the worthy and laborious Timbs, for instance, who worked in the same mine. Hepworth Dixon, once considered an almost awful power, from his connection with the *Athenæum*, was also a 'dead hand' at popularizing antiquarian subjects. To his books he gave taking titles, 'Her Majesty's Tower,' 'Spiritual Lives,' and the like. These writers were simply good 'prospectors'—they knew where to look for their nuggets, chiefly in the old magazines and memoirs. They were always 'making notes' and using their scissors freely, and were marvels of industry. Now everything has been dug up, collected, and set forth.

But it was curious that Dr. Doran should have been accepted seriously as a writer of learning. His most important work, 'The History of the English Stage,' is little more than a collection of magazine essays; and the facts are so mingled with glowing descriptions and imaginative details as to be of small value. He talked of the actors and actresses affectionately, of 'poor Peg' and 'dear Kitty Clive,' etc. I have this not uninteresting letter from him:

'I do not personally remember any actor who was of Garrick's time. Two or three who were his contemporaries, and who lingered on the stage to a very late period, were not of sufficient reputation to be worth mentioning. Paul Bedford is, I think, the only living actor (except old Neville, who is over eighty) who has played with actors who could remember Garrick. But Paul and Neville are small fry, and the incident is of no value.

'I know nothing new of Garrick. The actors know and care nothing. There is not a single local tradition of Kean in Drury Lane Theatre. There is no pride of profession in any of them; of other pride, too much. Their ignorance is astounding. I have been asked by them in the Green-room of Drury Lane Theatre on a Twelfth Night, when they were enjoying the cake, wine, and punch bequeathed by Baddeley to the actors of that theatre, who Baddeley was, and why he left such a legacy. That is a sample of how much they know of their own calling.

‘I cannot clearly decipher the last part of your note: not that I complain of it, seeing my own hieroglyphics, but I see it refers to a matter of reviewing. I am sure no censure ever hurt a good book, and in *that* the author of the one you refer to may take honest comfort. I did not myself see book or review, and do not know who was the reviewer.

‘I long to see your “Garrick,” and I wish it every possible success. Even people who have ceased to care for the stage may care for its greatest glory *but one*—Thomas Betterton. May your Christmas be mirthful, and your New Year happy!’

I first met him at an agreeable dinner given by Irving at the Garrick, where was also a most agreeable genial man — now pretty well forgotten — Sir W. Fergusson, the eminent surgeon.

Another person whom I knew for many years, and much esteemed, was Sir Bernard Burke, the ‘Ulster.’ He was born and made for a Court. He had an almost instinctive reverence for rank and title. This was natural, considering that every day of his life was spent in tracing points of pedigree, precedence, and the like; and his delight was when some opportunity of public state at the Irish Court came about, which he was enabled to regulate *secundem artem.* This occurred pretty frequently, in the shape of the admission of a new Knight into the Order of St. Patrick, etc. At the conclusion of the Crimean War he astounded the Dublin crowd by appearing in various public centres arrayed in his 'tabard,' attended by trumpeters, when he read out the treaty at length. He was a most genial, thoroughly good-natured man, and unsparing in helping any friends who desired assistance, literary or other, from his department. But, as I said, he had a pleasantly-exaggerated notion of the magic and potency of his craft, and would expatiate on it at great length. It was to him that Archbishop Whately addressed the well-known speech: 'Why, you don't even know the foolish rules of your own foolish business!' Everyone knows 'Burke's Peerage and Baronetage,' that annual deliverance arrayed in scarlet and gold, an odd *mélange* of pedigrees that go back to the most remote eras, mixed up with odd scraps of history and descriptive passages. In his courtly way

'Ulster's' practice was to accept such statements as 'the family' would furnish him, and this without impolitely scrutinizing too closely the often glowing and somewhat problematical claims that were set out. But one day a very hard-headed, pitiless disperser of heraldic humbug appeared—Mr. Foster, a man who demanded 'chapter and verse' for everything, and who, issuing a 'Peerage' of his own, proceeded to demolish many of the jerry-built structures the good-natured 'Ulster' had allowed to be set up. A particular essay the newcomer devoted to 'Ulster' himself, exposing these mistakes in a most amusing, trenchant, and 'scorching' production, done in the good old 'slogging' style. This had its effect, and the 'Peerage and Baronetage' lost many of its fictions. Sir Bernard was fond of writing, and his works fill many volumes. The gentle enthusiasm of his nature led him to adopt a too florid style, and to embroider his 'facts' with what is called 'fine writing.' He thoroughly believed in romance, noble feelings, etc. His 'Vicissitudes of Families' is a really interesting book, and has gone through many editions. He was altogether a very pleasing, interesting man, had no enemies, and innumerable friends. His last years, owing to ill-health, were spent in retirement, and he must have suffered many pangs at having to withdraw himself from his loved Record Tower in Dublin Castle, where he had spent so many happy hours.

The mention of Dublin Castle calls up the figure of one who long held sway there, that of the late Lord Carlisle, an amiable and popular man. No one ever revelled more in his office, or threw himself with more thorough enjoyment into its humours. Few will forget the odd personality, the heavy jaw, with the huge mouth,* always opening wide and yet wider at moments of hearty appreciation—his boyish eagerness to be present at any 'junketing' that was on foot. He was most good-natured and accessible—too accessible almost for his dignity, for anyone that appeared, if gifted with a good singing voice or powers of entertaining, was installed as favourite and loaded with attentions. The reign, however, was not a very long one. At that time there were a good many attractive women about his Court who could sing and play, and in many ways contribute to the public stock of harmless pleasure.*

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* One of 'H. B.'s' caricatures appeared representing Liston, whom he strongly suggested, as complaining: 'This fellow will take the bread out of my mouth.'

About him was that coterie of attendant officials y-clept 'The Court,' mostly old stagers, who had been retained on the establishment, handed on from Viceroy to Viceroy, no one having the heart or courage to displace them. They were, I suspect, much of the same pattern as the old retainers and courtiers of the more genuine Courts. Among them were 'Gentlemen at Large,' 'Master of the Horse,' 'Chamberlain,' 'Controller,' and the rest. There was even a 'State Dentist' and a 'Cupper in Ordinary.' It was an imposing sight to see the state entry at one of the balls, all these personages, arrayed in household uniform, blue coat and gilt buttons, with sky-blue satin lapels and white waistcoats, entering in solemn procession, two and two, to the notes of the National Anthem.

There was the old Colonel Willis, who dated from Lord Anglesey's day, and the versatile

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* To one fascinator he said eagerly: 'My dear Mrs. ——, when are you going to give me a night?' This speech the lively dame used to repeat with much enjoyment.

Secretary, of extraordinary personal attractions, whose head was said to be in large demand for religious pictures. This brilliant man had many gifts, was a lively talker, an admirable actor and musician, a reciter, linguist, etc., and an accomplished man of society. Not unnaturally, being so much flattered and followed, he was a little vain of his powers, and in an amusing way used to expatiate largely on himself and his feelings, in which, to do him justice, he was encouraged by his many admirers. With all this he was good-natured, and served his friends whenever he could.

Among these scenes I see the figure of Thomas Burke—'Tom' Burke, as he was called—one of the victims of the Phœnix Park murders, and an old friend. He was a cheerful, rather chatty person, and very conspicuous in the 'Castle' society. I remember his taking part in some charades given at a friend's house, for which he wrote some of the 'syllables.' I have a fragment of this work now before me.* On the fatal day of his assassination—one of the most dramatic that could have been conceived—Lord Spencer, the new Viceroy, had entered the city with much state. Everyone had seen the gay procession, the martial music. His coming was the earnest of the new Gladstonian régime, and was welcomed with tumultuous joy on one side and grave misgivings on the other.

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* It ran :

DANDELION.—I. DANDY.

SCENE.—*A Country Inn.* MR. JOBBLES *is sitting at a table.*

Enter MOORE.

JOBBLES : Ha, Mr. Moore ! Glad to see you.

But there had been strange signs and portents of the coming storm. Not long before, as I was walking up a street that led to the Kingstown terminus, I had noticed that about every ten yards or so a couple of truculent, desperado-looking men were posted, as if awaiting something. These ruffians made no effort at concealment, and their number and air of defiance ought to have attracted attention. It turned out later that they were looking for Mr. Forster, the Secretary, whose carriage they were to have

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MOORE: The top of the morning to you. Mary, darling, would you oblige me by a glass of punch, and plase let th'allowance be liberal, for it's mighty dhry I am and narvous.

JOBBLES: Good gracious, Miss Mary, where did you get that dress?

MOORE: It may be bad taste in me, but I don't admire it, etc.

And so on, in the usual style of such things. Poor Burke played the Irishman in rollicking style.

attacked and fired into. I was often struck, too, in the shops, by conversations I overheard, couched in dark, enigmatical terms, and hinting at something coming.

This day of the entry was a truly festival one, and I recollect, as we looked from a club-house window, seeing the doomed man with his family drive by in an open carriage, full of spirits and excitement. 'This is a great day for Tom,' said his friends. A short time afterwards he and his newly-arrived colleague set off on their fatal walk to the Phœnix Park, in the centre of which his official residence was.

That night I was dining out, and on coming home heard strange rumours of the assassination, but dismissed them as improbable. But on the next morning—a Sunday—all the streets were resounding with the cries of the newsmen proclaiming the dreadful story.

Lord Spencer had to spend the night of his first arrival writing despatches for the Queen, which a relation of my own carried to London next morning by special train. That journey was exciting, for he noted the crowds gathered at stations, who looked upon it as on some dread mystery, as it flew by; and when it stopped, people clustered round the windows asking questions. I have often passed the spot where the murder took place. It had a strange, blighted air, something like a neglected grave, by the side of a fine wide road.

Sir Edgar Boehm was certainly not a great sculptor, as his many works scattered over London show. Though they are fairly correct, there is a lack of spirit or inspiration in his efforts. The two angels over the altar in the Oratory were presented by him. It is perhaps forgotten now that his statue of Lord Lawrence, close by Carlton House Terrace, is not the original one, which was found so grotesque from its costume that the artist took it away, and recast it in its present shape.

He was an amiable, interesting man, and eke a modest, and open to any suggestions or advice. When a model of his Duke of Wellington was set up by way of experiment, I was struck by the strange fulness of the shoulders, and ventured to write to him to point out that this part of the body should be more attenuated and nervous, the other development suggesting a certain youthfulness and lack of refinement.

'Many thanks,' he wrote, 'for your kind letter. You are quite right in your remarks. I saw the faults you mention (with a good many more) as soon as the statue was in the open air. The model is only bronzed plaster, and enables me to make all the alterations required. The pedestal is only a wooden box, and the real granite one will have four soldiers (the different four nationalities) at the corners of it, and will have to be broader. But I do not think length would improve it.

'Yours truly and obliged,

'J. E. BOEHM.'

There must have been something pleasing and amiable in the character of the man who could thus accept free criticism from an 'outsider.'* The shoulders were in due time modified as I had suggested.

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* Free and intelligent criticism, if not made publicly and in a carping spirit, is always acceptable to a really capable artist. There is often a great mistake made as to the interpretation of that 'touchiness' or resentment with which criticisms are sometimes received. This is surely owing—and I speak from my own experiences—to annoyance or disappointment at finding what you thought was good proving to be unsatisfactory. You are vexed that so much time and trouble has been wasted. You have an instinctive certainty, too, that it will strike others in the same way. I may add here also that Londoners owe to me the abolition of a hideous eyesore—the heavy iron 'cage' that for so many years disfigured the top of the Duke of York's Monument. As I found that no one was

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allowed to ascend for suicidal or other purposes, I suggested to my friend, Mr. David Plunket, the Commissioner of Works, that it might be removed, and it was at once. I mention this trivial matter to prove that everyone in his small way can be of some service — and owes some service—to the community.

CHAPTER XI.

CHARLES MATHEWS—SOTHERN.

Most literary men, as I have said, seem to gravitate to the stage and to the concerns of the stage. Almost every writer that I know will confess, if adroitly led to the subject, that he has at least a tragedy or two in one of his drawers, and, if further encouraged, may tell of 'a very nice, cordial letter that he has had from Irving.' That courteous manager has to write many of these 'nice, cordial letters.' Many persons of high literary rank—poets particularly—keep sending him their productions, and their offers are entitled to fair and respectful consideration. A moment's reflection, however, would show such candidates that they were simply 'writing in water,' that a Lyceum production is a gigantic business, thought of, planned years in advance, and having to run six months or a year. The openings, then, must be few and far between. So the notion is Utopian, and simply a dream. But, still, the stage has such an attraction that the spell will ever work. The only chance of securing acceptance is by cultivating a sort of personal connection with the fraternity of the stage, for the average manager or stage-manager is guided by names and persons. He has little time to read, or exercise a delicate intellectual judgment.

There are a vast number of smart young fellows who 'hang loose' upon the theatres, and have picked up in their course a sort of stage knowledge. They write criticisms for some small paper, and thus have the *entrée*, or they have slightly helped someone greater than themselves in the manufacture of a burlesque. There comes at last to be a sort of faith in these people, and their productions managers are not indisposed to accept. A very large section of the outside community, it may be taken for a certainty, are to be found all the year struggling to get their pieces on the stage. Every post brings the manager packets from candidate dramatists. As they arrive with such regularity, so the same regularity attends the method of disposing of them—that is, the unceremoniously tossing them into a drawer, where they lie until angry and too pertinacious demands for their return cause them to be searched for.

How pleasantly does Charles Mathews rise before us, with his delightful gaiety and easiness of style, his refined figure, delicate hands, and small, expressive features! His voice, too, how light and airy, as if he were carrying on a conversation! No one gave you so little the notion that he was acting; his voice was clear and distinct; he had never occasion to raise it. Charles not only filled the stage of the theatre, but that of the world outside. Eyes rested on him almost fondly; he was one of the public's friends. They liked him. At times, indeed, he was almost too natural.

Some years before his death, this pleasant, mercurial performer, it will be remembered, seemed altogether to lose his attraction. He was completely neglected, and not undeservedly, it must be admitted, for he seemed to have grown careless, and, overwhelmed with his difficulties, took little pains to please. Many will recall that strange performance of his, 'Escaped from Portland,' in which this elegant, bright comedian actually took the part of a convict! I was present on the first night, and still recall the general enjoyment and ridicule mingled with surprise. The gay Charles, when he found that his tragic efforts were not taken *au sérieux*, turned the whole into a broad farce, treating it as if it were some huge practical joke. The audience only half relished this, the author not at all. When Charles was handcuffed and led off for punishment, there was a roar, in which I think he joined.

A similar trick was attempted by Frederic Le Maitre, who, by a stroke of genius, converted Robert Macaire from a melodramatic into a grotesque part. This suggests to me that I was fortunate enough when a youth to have seen the great Frederic himself. But it was a sad spectacle. He was engaged at a rather obscure Paris theatre of a transpontine sort. The play, I remember, was called 'Le Crime de Faverne,' and the plot was this: An old man cherishing the memory of his wife, whom he adored, finds in a trunk a number of letters which prove that he had been deceived. At this time Frederic was old, feeble, palpably given over to drunkenness and improvidence; yet on this discovery, the face lit up, the old fires came into the eyes. He frantically tossed the papers in the air, began to sing with a low 'crooning' voice, then to dance softly. It was a strange, uncanny performance. When Irving was getting up 'Robert Macaire,' I was able to give him a hint or two of this mad, half-inspired being.

By another chance, just after I had left school, I managed to see a famous old actor, also in the last stage of decay. It was at the old Sadler's Wells Theatre, and the good and famous comedian, always spoken of as 'Old Farren,' was to be brought forward, which, as it proved, was *literally* the case. The veteran had played in the last century, and now, at a very advanced age, *sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* speech, *sans* everything, was propped and led, as it were, through a favourite play of his called 'Grandfather Whitehead.' It was a sad, unpleasing spectacle of decrepitude and senility. The poor veteran could scarcely walk; he mumbled something, for the point of the thing was that he was as old and feeble as the character. It was sad to see him led about and prompted, at times sinking into utter vacancy. The person who was most useful to him on this occasion was his son, a tall, good-looking young man, known then and long after as 'Young Farren.' I was walking with him only yesterday, but 'Young Farren' has now grown to be old and stately, an admirable actor, with fine solid comedy gifts.

It was, however, a curious, if not a piteous exhibition. The old man seemed dazed, and at times scarcely conscious of what was going on. A sort of faint mumbling took the place of regular utterance. I can call him before me now, as he sat helplessly in his chair, his theatrical children grouped round him, and I suppose striving to suggest something of the business of the scene. It was a relief when the exhibition was over. The audience were friendly and encouraging to their old favourite. How true is it that—

> 'Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage'!

Of Charles Mathews, too, this might have been said, save for his unconquerable vivacity and energy, which made him, even to the last, a genuine contributor to the public entertainment. After he returned from America, it was astonishing what a rally he made, and how completely the public returned to their old favourite. Crowded houses and obstreperous applause, as at some striking novelty, was the order of the day. This was a phenomenon.

One of his most brilliant characters, and one eminently suited to him, was Affable Hawk in 'The Game of Speculation.' This, as is well known, is a version of Balzac's powerful drama of 'Mercadet le Faiseur,' and sets out the ingenious shifts of a daring speculator who wishes to conceal or tide over his ruin, until he has succeeded in marrying his daughter to a wealthy suitor. It would be impossible to give an idea of the brilliancy, the 'airiness,' and animation of the versatile changes, the unflagging liveliness of the gay Charles in this character. He was himself the play. It was delightful farce, scarcely comedy, and he was so pleasantly insinuating, and bore his little embarrassments so gaily, that there was merriment from beginning to end. It was certainly one of his best performances. The version itself, though free, is spirited, and was made by that clever man Frederick Lawrence, author of 'Guy Livingstone,' in an incredibly short period of time—I think within twenty-four, or at most forty-eight, hours.

In the disastrous year of the war, 1870, a fragment of the French company, it will be remembered, fled to London, and eked out their slender resources at the Opera Comique by some performances. They were received with much sympathy, and I remember how the exiled French flocked to see and support their countrymen. It was curious to note their hostile flashing eyes, when some awkward chance placed them beside a German, who was coldly courteous and indifferent. I have seen the situation grow unendurable at last, possibly too much so for restraint ; and the Frenchman, after much glaring and defiance, would gather up his opera-glass, bill, etc., and retreat to another seat, the German looking after him impassively.* It was on that occasion that I saw the matchless Got give Balzac's original Mercadet, and *his* version of the character. It was an utterly different thing. We were lifted into the realms of intense absorbing tragedy. It was grave, powerful, masterly, perhaps the finest of the fine things the actor has done. There was a strange fascination and suspense in it, and, like the rest of the world, I was filled with admiration.

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* During those dismal performances there was given a piece, once popular in the repertoire, 'La Jeunesse de Richelieu,' in which a brilliant, gaily-dressed *poudré* youth, apparently about seventeen years old, performed with extraordinary spirit and vivacity. This proved to be Dejazet, the ever-blooming, the really old Dejazet, who had actually played before Napoleon ! It was astonishing to note her agile ways, the suppleness of her movements, the animation of her face, and the full cheeks. She danced about the stage full of life and spirit, her voice sounding clear, and even youthful.

At the time I was writing for a magazine month by month a number of sketches of actors and actresses, under the title of 'Players of our Day,' in which their merits and defects were dealt with pretty freely. When I came to Mathews, after giving him full praise for all his various gifts, I made a comparison between his and Got's impersonation of this great character. I urged that Got's was the true and correct version, such as, indeed, Balzac, the gloomy tragic analyst of mental emotion, must have intended. He surely meant the desperate struggle against impending fate, the despairing mimicry of ease and gaiety, the soul sick within. No situation could be more terrible, ruin being within a few hours' distance, yet Mercadet had to put on smiles and give dinners. I know nothing finer in the way of dramatic effect than the arrival of the news of his being left a fortune, his taking it to be one of the deceptions, and the almost tragic astonishment removed from anything like joy with which he at last grasps the truth. All this Got conveyed in the finest style, and all this was, of course, lost in Charles

Mathews's version, which was merely diverting, as he intended it to be.

A critic, however, in one of the papers took up Mathews's defence, and seemed to insinuate that these distinctions were not well founded, that Charles's reading was the correct one, and as good as need be. I replied with vigour, and reinforced my arguments.

By-and-by the actor himself took the field, and with scorn and irritation, and much smartness, too, defended himself. No one could write with more liveliness and ability. He denied that Balzac intended a tragic complexion to be given to the character. It might be Got's Mercadet, but it was not Balzac's. Geoffrey, another player, made it a sort of Robert Macaire. As to the tragic view of the case, it was simply ridiculous. 'Mons. Got has no greater admirer than myself, but if he takes a tragic view of the character, and plays it with pathos, he has for once made a mistake.' He then added that he was convinced of two things—first, that I had never seen him in the 'Game of Speculation' at all, and that I had never *read* Balzac's original play. In the first statement he was quite wrong, as I had seen him several times; as to the second, he was right.

But this, of course, made no difference, as I had *seen* the French piece acted. The argument, in short, amounted to little more than denial.

With all this touchiness, which is 'a badge of his tribe,' Mathews was an amiable, good-humoured creature. After dealing many smart, almost vicious strokes at the writer, he sent me, almost at the same moment, the following truly characteristic effusion, which I was not a little astonished to receive.

'37, Half-Moon Street,
'*December* 10, 1872

'My dear Sir,—The first lawyers in the land bully each other in public, and then walk off together arm-in-arm, the best friends in the world. With such high precedents I address you as a man and a brother, and boldly ask you as a favour to do in earnest what I only proposed in jest—viz., to come and see the "Game of Speculation." I will keep you a stall for any night in the week you will select. You write too well not to make it a laudable ambition to obtain your honest and, if possible, revised criticism. I promise to play the part exactly as I have always done, and if, after seeing it patiently from beginning to end, you still condemn, I will meekly bow my head, and regret my inability to please you; while, should I succeed in inducing you to change your opinion, I should feel sincere pride in causing you to modify your verdict. As a writer worthy of attention, I am naturally anxious to obtain your mature criticism, which I hope you will as freely give as I will very readily receive.'*

Now, considering that this modest letter was written by an experienced actor of the first rank, I naturally look at it with pleasure, as a most flattering compliment. At the same time, it will be readily understood what was passing in his mind. He had, no doubt, been made restless by the idea that the other reading was of higher state and value, and might turn out to be the true one. Such doubts are often roused by some careless but genuine remark. I need hardly say that I availed myself of his offer, and was duly found in the stalls, as he desired, listening with delight to his buoyant interpretation of the character. As may be imagined, he must have exerted himself; and I might almost say that I here enjoyed a special performance, given for my particular benefit. I must confess that he did not exactly bring me round to the view he desired; but he must have been a gruff, ungracious, over-conscientious soul that could tell the actor such a thing. Altogether it was a piquant, original business.

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* This letter I have given before in another work with only a slight sketch of the incident. But I give the story, such as it is, at full length.

Afterwards we became friends, and up to his death he was ever cordial and good-natured. Notwithstanding his many troubles and embarrassments, he was always buoyant and in good spirits; and he somehow contrived to leave those whom he saw or visited in good spirits also. 'I have been long and much surprised at not hearing from you,' he wrote in 1875, 'and more surprised at hearing that you have not heard from me months ago (I don't know how many). I acknowledged your book, and told you my impressions respecting it (I forget now what they were), and, *this* I do remember, pointed out the omission of a name, etc. I am glad, at any rate, to see your writing, as it gives me this opportunity of assuring you that I could not have been guilty of inattention to any work of one I esteem so highly.' And again: 'After a pleasant little tour of three or four days in the environs your note reached me. I am much flattered by the compliment you propose to pay me, and shall look forward with great interest to the volume you mention. Let me take this opportunity of thanking you heartily for the treat you afforded me by your " Life of Garrick." I hope you will carry out your promise of sending me the little piece you have in contemplation.' Again in 1877: ' If you are not off to Epsom or otherwise engaged, I will take the chance of finding you at home and telling you all I know, which is far from what you wish to know, on the subject of the Garrick Pictures.' (These had been collected by his father.) ' I shall ask you in return to tell me where the article you allude to is to be found—don't take this as a bad compliment. A man dined with me on Sunday (and one who lives in town), and suddenly asked me, " When are you going to play in London again?" I had been playing there, as you know, for two or three months. This is hard when you think the eyes of all Europe are upon you.'

I well remember his visit that morning, when he was perfectly delightful, saying many good, lively things, not of much pretension, perhaps, but putting one in good humour. He died not long after, and I heartily wished that I had known him earlier.

Another of these mercurial creatures was Sothern, the creator of Lord Dundreary. I confess, as I recall him on the stage, as well as off it, I find a pleasantly festive feeling rising, and the facial muscles relaxing. He was really a most engaging man, such a spirit of jest and good-humour had he. He seemed to have a perpetual spirit of frolic to exhibit in his talk, acts, and letters. The play-going public is certainly indebted to him for some of its most extravagantly hilarious hours, and for some years he really 'increased the gaiety of the nation.'

No one can forget the thoroughly obstreperous enjoyment, maintained from the beginning to the end, of his most original performance of Lord Dundreary, which, as is well known, was almost entirely his own creation. It was so buoyant, so ludicrously absurd, so spontaneous, so rich in its touches and strokes of humour, that the Haymarket audience roared, and roared again through the night, until its sides ached. Extravagant and overcharged as the character was, there was a great deal of real art and true comedy in the conception; for he contrived to make the absurdity appear natural, while he courted sympathy by a genuinely good-natured and good-hearted feeling, which underlay the grotesqueness. The long scene with his lady-love was a triumph; it was virtually a monologue; but he conveyed the notion that fresh ideas were suggesting themselves every instant, and he rambled from topic to topic, revealing his own internal doubts and speculations, in the most diverting way. It was a picture of an inconsequent, well-meaning, flighty-minded personage. The finish, too, of the whole was remarkable; the quaint movements, the little 'hop,' the stammering eagerness—all was in harmony. It was certainly the most completely original and the most successful portrait that has been seen on the stage in this generation.

Sothern was married to an amiable, pleasing woman of good family and high connections in the North of Ireland, with whom for some years he lived very happily. But his erratic mode of life was not favourable to domestic bliss, and he was no exception to the fate that seems to attend actors in their conjugal relations. He had a charming house at Kensington, at the bottom of one of the little avenues off High Street. I remember visiting him here, and finding him in the old-fashioned garden, under a spreading yew, the table laid with cooling drinks, and surrounded by friends. This house was later in the possession of Monsignor Capel, who has long since disappeared from the firmament.

I must say that, with all my partiality for the gifts of this pleasant player, nothing could have been more *detestable* than his performance of a pathetic or tragic part. His voice became solemn and horny ; he spoke slowly and with a ludicrous intensity meant to convey deep feeling. His tones were, further, inflexible and untutored, and would not correspond with his good intentions. But he persisted to the last in the faith that he was a serious actor. He tried his powers in various pathetic, and even romantic, characters, as in 'Home,' a version of 'L'Aventurière,' and 'The Romance of a Poor Young Man.' He worked desperately hard to convey the idea of intense mental suffering and passion, but without the least result. For the same reason I never could think much of his 'David Garrick,' in which he struck the same false note. It seemed to me a boisterous, overdone performance, without delicacy. A grand point, as it was thought to be, was the dragging down the curtain as he rushed out in his state of simulated intoxication. The capital and rather exciting story, however, attracted.

The actor of one supremely successful character has to pay a terrible penalty for his success. The character clings to him like a shirt of Nessus. It seems as though he can never strip it off. A list could be given of these inconveniently clinging garments. Sothern was Dundreary, and was only permitted to be Dundreary. It was almost pathetic to see the desperate efforts he made to win favour in something else. He devised the notion of a brother of Dundreary, who was to come from America, I think, and Tom Taylor fashioned a piece for him on this theme, called 'Sam's' or Tham's 'Arrival.' He was 'Bwother Tham,' with flaxen hair, and in a sort of yellow dustcoat. It was a lame, feeble conception, and produced little effect.

I had written a novel with a fantastic part of a vain 'superior' person—Captain Fermor* he was called—who had been drawn from the life, and laid out on psychological lines. I suggested him as a good character to Sothern. 'Oddly enough,' he answered me from The Cedars, 'I was saying the other day that I thought I could make a fine part of Captain Fermor. I read many numbers of "Never Forgotten" on its first appearance, and press of work alone prevented my finishing it. If you will lend me a copy, I shall be delighted to read it. From four till a quarter to seven I am found at home.'

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* Among my acquaintances at this time was a man of fashion, of extraordinary cleverness and many gifts, but with a most extraordinary personal feeling—or vanity—developed to a degree that was almost incredible. He studied himself, talked of himself and his feelings, and of nothing else. Yet

When staying in Folkestone during a dull season of the year, when the little town was *sans* company or amusement, I was glad to see, one morning, the dead walls break out in festive

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somehow he contrived to make that subject interesting. The character was so original and attractive that, do what I would, I was irresistibly drawn into elaborately sketching him as this Captain Fermor. And I may say the portrait was life-like. His character was the whole story. Not an incident, not a speech, was his, yet in such situations as were given in the story you felt that he must have behaved and spoken as described. It was an embarrassing situation when he came to me one day, and said: 'I have been reading your book, and, do you know, I think you have taken Fermor from *me!*' I could only falter something about 'general type of character—like so many, you know.' After all, I really believe he was flattered.

announcements of the coming of an entertainer—a 'reader,' in fact, one rather notable—Bellew. How forgotten is this sort of personage after his brief strut on the stage! Then everyone had an interest in him. I went with delight to his 'show'—at the usual bald, whitewashed Assembly Rooms. I listened with pleasure to his performance—notably to his 'Good News from Ghent,' which he gave in stirring fashion. He was what might be called a rather *heartless* reader, and highly artificial, but he had a considerable following.

I went round to see him, and he came to breakfast. I remember his explaining to me that he had a fixed *clientèle* in all these little slumbering towns, not numerous, but regular supporters of his. Sometimes a town did not 'pay,' but the next one more than did. He was a curious man, and had a curious career. He died in 1874.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS.

The extraordinary charm and vitality of the stage—its influence and even fascination on those who are its devotees—can hardly be exaggerated. It is really the next thing to living beings and characters. We seem to have known the old capable actors in the flesh—to have talked with them and liked them. Our thoughts are constantly turning back to their agreeable presentments. Is it wonderful that so many, not playgoers even, think fondly of these associations, and find in such memories a perpetual entertainment? Speaking for myself, I must confess that no compartment of the memory supplies such fruitful and enjoyable images as that in which recollections of the old players are stored away. As I walk the streets I find myself often smiling with sympathy as I call up Buckstone and Compton, with their most expressive faces, and in some droll situation. Without them the past would have been but half complete. Elia's description of the old actors he had seen affects us much in the same way, even though we have not seen them.

Here, for the pleasure of the thing, I am tempted to supply a few sketches—well coloured as I may consider them, because they are drawn with sympathy and fondness—of these merry, pleasant caterers for public enjoyment. There is many an old playgoer who will read them with pleasure, because suggesting some welcome, forgotten association. Delightful memories, and more delightful nights, are connected with certain of these performers who figured on the stage some thirty years ago or so. They were like the old friends and characters that we had known in private life, and whose very talk seemed to influence our conduct. The good pieces in which they performed were as real incidents of life.

An age seems to have passed away since we have looked on them; and yet it is not so many years since the merry twinkling Buckstone was to be seen passing into his Café de l'Europe in the Haymarket, the slow-moving Webster walking beside him. There was the dry Compton, the lively Charles Mathews with his brisk step, the solemn Phelps with his craggy face, Howe, Miss Woolgar (still with us), Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Paul Bedford, Wright, Fechter, Sothern, and many more familiar figures. Pleasant company indeed are these old ghosts.

Not so many years ago, when passing that not too savoury *purlieu* yclept Endell Street, tributary of the Seven Dials, I noted a tall, quaintly-dressed old man severely lecturing some street boys who in their gambols had run up against him, probably using him as a coigne of vantage to hide from each other. There was a tart asperity and vigorous dramatic action in his tones and manner that attracted me, and I recognised Phelps—good old Phelps, to whom I was seriously indebted for many an intellectual hour—his stick particularly: it was, or should have been, a Malacca cane. He carried it exactly as Sir Antony does in the play, as though ready to lay it on the back of offenders. With what severity he rated those lads! They were awestricken! A capital stage face and figure had he, with a certain effective crabbedness, and a Gallican air of humour and sly wit lurking about him. There is no one now on the stage his equal for giving weight and point to a sentence, which came out clean and emphatic, firm as from a mould. He seemed to put meaning into colourless sentences —an essential art with the player.

Phelps was ever satisfactory ; even in the latter days, when his voice was feeble, he always gave you a thoroughly enjoyable time of it. I never missed one of his afternoons, and his characters will always be hung up in the gallery of my recollections—they are my Sir Joshuas and Gainsboroughs—from their roundness, colour, and vitality. What figures, too, were those of his three baronets, Sir Pertinax, Sir Antony, and Sir Peter ; his Lord Ogleby and Malvolio ! Perhaps, on the whole, the last was his best, taking into account the difficulties, and the usual wretched result in the hands of buffooning performers. It was exactly the reading of Charles Lamb, and, need it be said, the true one. Phelps, however, will be always associated with Sir Pertinax—a part which he must have played thousands of times. I suspect that in that character he was really the equal of any of the vaunted performers of Garrick's day.

A portrait of him in that character—possibly there is such—should be on the walls of the

Garrick. No one ever approached him in it, nor will approach him for a long time to come. We should hardly have cared for his performance of 'Macbeth' and the conventional tragedian parts, though we believe he played them well, *à la* Macready. I recall him in 'Ingomar,' at the Aquatic Theatre. There was a breadth of comedy in him which was extraordinary.

His 'Bottom the Weaver' rises before us now as a rich presentation. Instead of the common buffooning fellow we are accustomed to, he put before us an earnest, ignorant worker, with some loosely-formed ideal before him, who was anxious to distinguish himself. We were shown many curious turns and humours hitherto unsuspected. The play became quite a serious, important business—as was natural, for they were going to play before the Duke. This was pure comedy; so with the short pantomimic incident of the ass's head, which he carried with an unconscious air as though it were a human one.

In the recent revival of the play—Mr. Benson's—there was in this part a poetical conception admirably carried out. At the close of the Midsummer gambols all the fairies were grouped in front, the thick clustered foliage forming the background, while in the centre and place of honour appeared Bottom with an air of complacent dignity, his ass's neck encircled with a wreath of flowers. This sort of sylvan apotheosis suggested some quaint disordered dream, and imparted credibility to the whole. It is such touches as these that help illusion on the stage.

In the later Adelphi times, say about 1870, 'old Ben Webster' was still to be seen hobbling and shuffling along Maiden Lane to his stage-door. Everything then seemed to be 'going to seed' or to desolation. Theatres were closed or closing; those that kept open were staggering on, trying this and that device to secure an audience. There was no solidity or permanency in anything theatrical. All was experimental. Great houses, such as Drury Lane, the St. James's, the Lyceum, were standing there unlet, or opened for a few weeks only; there were a vast number of good actors standing about, also 'unlet,' and haunting Wellington Street and the Strand. They were performers of merit; but somehow their engagement was the signal for an abrupt closing of the house.

The theatres that were open under regular management were few in number and old and shabby: they could be counted on the fingers. The contrast between that stagnant era and the present flourishing time is extraordinary; over a score new houses have been added to the list, and the old houses have nearly all been either rebuilt or reconstructed.

At this time, too, the good 'stock' companies of the Haymarket, the Adelphi and the Strand were breaking up. It was sad to meet in the streets surrounding the Haymarket Buckstone, now old and broken, and struggling with difficulties, in company with his brother veteran, Ben Webster, who still clung to his Adelphi, and occasionally performed.

But Buckstone—the 'good old Buckstone,' the delight of our boyhood—made a visit to the bright Haymarket something akin to enchantment. Oh for those days of pure, unalloyed theatrical pleasure! You went to see not the play, but Buckstone *lui-même*. He would figure in some unpretending but satisfactory character in the important piece of the night. But it was not until towards ten o'clock that people poured in —it was the day of 'second price'—to see their 'Bucky' virtually by himself in some deliciously absurd situation or farce. His voice, heard first behind the scene, sent an anticipatory chuckle through the theatre, to swell into a roar when he appeared. It was full of an unctuous enjoyment.

When he came on, his figure was unconsciously grotesque, not dressed up to look absurd, but naturally so, like some of those 'quizzes' we meet occasionally in society, who are unconscious that their friends are so amused at them. This same tone of easy, natural, unforced drollery attended him to the very last sentence of the piece. He was irresistible—as when he would tell us quietly that 'he had gone to Buxton to drink the waters.'

The whole drama was 'Bucky' himself. Oh for that exquisitely comic face, that mouth twisted to one side, the words issuing from one of its corners, the eyes twinkling with unctuous drollery and fun! And the series of absurd embarrassments, with roars, to the end, when everyone went home to supper or bed in good humour and enjoyment! 'Box and Cox,' too, what a roar that was! So, too, with 'Only a Halfpenny,' and a vast number of such trifles, written specially for him. He certainly contributed hugely to the public stock of harmless pleasure.

This 'seeing Buckstone' was entertainment enough; and it is curious now to look back and think how the enjoyment depended on the exertions of a single personage, who spread light and animation all about him. Buckstone, in fact, *was* the Haymarket. Now, as the night draws on, we require solid, substantial pieces of 'pudding' to be partaken of slowly and deliberately, and go home—interested, indeed, but rather thoughtful and serious.

This change in taste gives rise to some curious speculations. There can be no doubt that the growing artificialities of our time, the multiplication of innumerable details, which encumber life at present, have checked the spontaneousness of theatrical humour. The humour of Buckstone was exceptional and *hors ligne;* but it is likely that were one with the same talent to arise in our time he would have to adapt himself to the conditions of the time. The present popular humour is of a rather meagre and superficial sort, dealing mostly with verbal pleasantries. There is also some lack of skill in character-drawing on the part of our dramatists, owing to their profuse and systematic borrowings from the French *répertoire.*

It was sad to think of the slow change and gradual decay that attended his closing years. The old Haymarket company, with its Howes, and Fitzwilliams, and Chippendales, began to decay also; not from anyone's fault, but because, like so many other institutions, it had outlived public interest. Public taste and public manners were changing. Still the old company clung to its antique pieces, which began at last to leave the impression of something 'mouldy,' much as though we were entering the dining-room of an ancient, disused country house where are lanky sideboards and spiky-legged horsehair chairs and twisted chandeliers. I recall one night when 'No Song, No Supper' was actually revived with almost dismal effect.

Buckstone was adroit enough to see the necessity of change, and two ventures on modern lines restored prosperity, for a time at least, to the old house. These were Sothern's 'Lord Dundreary,' which Buckstone supported by playing an American, and Gilbert's fairy pieces, notably 'The Palace of Truth.' Though he was droll enough in the 'Art Critic,' it was but the shadow of the old Buckstone. It was said that he could not hear a word spoken by the others, but adroitly followed the movements of their lips. Though vast sums were made for him by these two pieces—the old comedian's tastes were rather extravagant—he could not save or keep his money. By-and-by he had to give up the control of his theatre, and I fear this cheerful 'son of Momus' had to endure many troubles in his closing years.

One of the best-known of the Haymarket troupe was Howe, the present 'good old Howe!' Take an old Haymarket bill in your hand, one of the long, rustling, 'tissue-paper things' with its rich black and blackening capitals—that was the *real* bill—and it is curious to read: 'JOSEPH SURFACE . . . . Mr. HOWE.' Mrs. Fitzwilliam's name had always a classical sound. At this moment I am looking at an old bill announcing her in the first performance of 'Money,' just fifty-four years ago. In it I find a number of well-known names—Macready and Miss Helen Faucit, Wrench—'easy, natural Wrench,' as Elia described him—Walter Lacy, Howe, as 'Tabouret, an Upholsterer,' and Priscilla Horton. Fifty-four years is a long dramatic stretch, and it is wonderful now to cast one's eyes on the *Times* of the day under the clock and see the old familiar name Howe among the characters. With this worthy solid performer my own humble efforts have been associated; and it was a pleasure to see him in the last days of the old Haymarket rattling through a light farce which I had written—a task which he performed with hearty good-will and much spirit. He lately rather surprised me by telling me that he was a *Quaker*—and is, I suppose, the only 'Friend' on the stage.

We then sat in the boxes or dress-circle—three or four rows of very straitened seats rising in tiers—there were no stalls then. But how enjoyable was the good old Haymarket pit. with the broad comfortable backs to the seats, and the abundant room! The floor was high; you felt fully in the house; the faces were on a level with the stage itself. This arrangement continued until the Bancrofts took possession. In 'The Housekeeper' I recall a pleasing woman, also long associated with the Haymarket glories—Mrs. Humby—once a beautiful and much-admired creature, in connection with whose name a free-and-easy rhyme was circulated.

The name of Ben Webster calls up the old Adelphi times, where the peculiar stirring dramas of intensely exciting action, played with humour too, passed before the gaze. I have often speculated, Was it the keen enjoyment of youth that lent such an extraordinary charm, or the superior quality of the performance as compared with those of our time? I am inclined to think there was then a more simple faith abroad; melodramatic topics had not become so well-worn and hackneyed; the actors, too, were better trained and practised in the arts of the melodrama. Smugglers, daring captains, caves, heroines carried off, firing of pistols—these were the staple of the Adelphi drama. Personally, I was never tired of them. There was Ben Webster himself, 'O' Smith, Miss Woolgar, with whom we were all in love, Madame Celeste, Wright, Paul Bedford.

Madame Celeste was inseparable from the spirit of the Adelphi; she seemed to believe thoroughly in the piece she was playing in, and she had a truly romantic style. And Wright, too, with his exuberant buffoonery! He was really unapproachable in his line, from his excessive buoyancy and spontaneousness. When he and Paul Bedford were on the stage together the fun became fast and furious. In every Adelphi drama there was always found one of these extravagant characters for Wright, such as a sea-sick passenger, who would exhibit the agonies of the *mal de mer* in an almost too realistic fashion. The apparition of the much-derided 'Adelphi Guests' comes before me with vividness. There was hardly a piece produced without their necessary presence; but we believed in them. How affecting to see them, as I did in 'Marie Ducange' (Bayle Bernard's), when the ball was interrupted by the violent death of the heroine! These sympathising persons, arm-in-arm always, and wearing white thread gloves, then entered, and invariably grouped themselves round the prostrate victim, their faces expressing the most intense feeling, and even horror.

What absorbing interest in that old Adelphi drama 'The Green Bushes'! How great was Celeste—'the Madam,' as she was called—in her gipsy 'Miami'! We always thought of it with tender interest. When it was revived, after many years, I looked forward to a revival also of the old feelings. But what a disappointment! It was astonishingly flat. Ben Webster was, of course, from his managerial right, always the central figure. He delighted ever in those full-flavoured, round, melodramatic characters that figured in all sorts of adventures, generally beginning in France, where he would escape from prison, then turn up in England, disguised, and carrying out his scheme of vengeance against the really bad man who had immured him, but was now raised to power and affluence. He was very slow and deliberate, announcing his plans at great length, and allotting himself many soliloquies. Yet he was highly coloured, and picturesque to a certain extent. Such a piece was 'Janet Pride,' in which there was the Foundling Hospital in Paris, a stolen child, a villainous schemer, and 'Ben' himself the centre of all, in various dresses, moving on his ponderous way through the piece. At times he would work up a situation to an intense, almost 'blubbering' pathos. I remember him in 'The Dead Heart,' which I scarcely recognised in the recent Lyceum revival. It seemed a more vigorous and stirring piece, Toole being humorously obstreperous, and riding about on a cannon. Ben was extra slow and solemn on this occasion, and every now and then was heard protesting that his 'heart was *dad*.' In his later, more decrepit days, when he produced 'The Wandering Jew,' and played the crafty Rodin, he was discovered in his cabinet at his desk; but he took such an unconscionable time opening letters, tapping his forehead, smiling sarcastically, without uttering a word, a pantomime intended to signify deep craft, that the gallery became rudely impatient, having no idea what was intended, and called to him loudly to 'Hurry up' and 'Git on.'

There was an agreeable, interesting actress, but of little power—Miss Furtado—who was at one time his 'leading lady,' and to whom the old player was paternally partial. Not long after, he astonished, and perhaps amused, his friends by wedding a young girl; he must have been 'going on' for eighty at the time. I had written a comic piece which I was eager should appear on the old Adelphi boards, and Dickens very good-naturedly undertook to lay it before his old friend 'Ben,' who of course considered it carefully, but did not find it suitable to his house. Dickens criticised it freely, as did also the manager. It was something in the way of *prix de consolation* to have been sat in judgment on by two such persons.

Another of these fine old Haymarket performers was Compton, who, after the breaking up of his old corps, began to appear fitfully here, there, and everywhere. But it was no longer the same thing. He had lost the support of his fellows. In a company of this kind, long cemented together, each seems to act as much for his companions as he does for himself. It is one whole. The gradual decay of the old Haymarket corps was a sad blow to dramatic art and education. Yet it was unavoidable. It had outlived its day. When it went round 'the provinces,' with its good old stock pieces, what a treat it was! How keenly enjoyed were 'Money,' 'The School for Scandal,' 'She Stoops to Conquer,' and other old classics! What roars of laughter at Sir Peter and Sir Antony! It was as though some new pieces were being presented, though the latter would not have excited nearly such hilarity. The company acted judiciously, taking in occasionally new recruits and fresh blood, such as the Chippendales and Madge Robertson. I well recall the general flutter, the discussions in the papers, when a new performer for the provinces, one Everill, was enrolled. It seemed a high affair of state. There were grave doubts and prognostics. But Everill proved to be of the good school, and had all the sound traditions. He and Howe still remain.

The very aspect of Compton was mirth-moving, from the keen gravity of his features. Lewis, of the Daly Company, suggests him a good deal, and has the same 'dry' manner, though more exuberant at times. He was thin and wiry, short and spare, as a comedian should be. He had some delightful tricks, such as drawing in or sucking in his cheeks when he had said anything dry or droll; also a curious dealing with his trousers. In fact, merely to *see* Compton, to have him before you, was an entertainment itself—a sort of play. The fact of knowing that something exquisitely diverting was *in petto*, though not yet exhibited, was almost enough. The mere anticipation was dramatic. His Graves in 'Money,' his contorted dance with the widow, was the finest comedy in the world, on account of its naturalness and complete reserve. Other comedians over-do this dancing. This play, of course, does not 'go' as it did, because the high tone and style of treating it is lost, with the traditions, the fine antique state, and its pleasant ladies and gentlemen. Even the smaller comedians of the company were excellent. There was 'little Clark'—'little Clark of the Haymarket,' as he was called, to distinguish him from other Clarks and Clarkes—and the perky Coe, with his pippin-like face and shrill voice, and Braid, whose name one liked to see in the bills.

What an admirable pair of performers were the Chippendales! The husband had a gnarled old man's face, and a rather feeble and husky voice; indeed, he was a veteran, yet no one would have wished him younger. You always felt that the part could not have been done better, and that he was, in fact, the character itself. It was delightful to see him play Sir Peter to the graceful and winsome Madge Robertson's Lady Teazle, her excessive youth contrasting strongly with his cantankerous aspect. This, however, was not the author's intention, who intended his Sir Peter to be a middle-aged gentleman of fifty. But it did not much matter.

His wife, an admirable, sound actress, was always cast for the domineering matron, which she presented in a most original way, without any noise or shrewishness. You felt there was a person before you with a reserve of force; she contrasted by the very tone of her voice and a glance of her eye. Often she and her husband played together, and the spectacle was diverting indeed. It was wonderful indeed, in these days of actor-management, to think of all these talents being brought together in a single company. Chippendale is a good theatrical name, fit to go with Munden, Dowten, Suett. We have no such old men now in face and figure.

Alfred Wigan, too—what a performer he was! He was elegance personified ; his elocution, expression, movements, all had 'distinction.' People always seemed to identify him with the depraved man of high rank and courtly manners he represented. Like so many of the comedians, he did not depend on words and sentences to convey his character—you saw it in his face and bearing. What a charming performance was his Richelieu in 'The Duke's Wager,' a version of one of Dumas's plays, 'Mdlle. de Belleisle.' Here he was perfection for his fine manners and the touch of sympathy which he imparted to the character. I can contrast his Château Renaud with the modern interpreters of the character, such as Mr. Terriss, who made of it a sort of rough *spadassin*, neither French nor English.

At this moment I can call up before me Wigan as the polished, masterful man of the world, full of an exquisite courtesy, gentleman-like in every movement. There was thus an interest excited in him as well as in the hero. The very glances of Wigan—suspicious, resigned, full of a dread presentiment—even now at this long interval come back on me like a portrait.

He was wonderful in delineations of French-men, as in his 'Battle Horse,' *Le Père de la Débutante*, where a pathetic, snuffy old Frenchman takes up the cause of his daughter, who is to make her début, and whom a rival tries to supplant. It was astonishing what vivacity and national character he put into this part, and, it must be said, what extravagance too. For he used to come down into the orchestra and pit, beat the drum, and address the characters on the stage. This perversion seems out of place, as it confuses the ideal with the real world. How well I recall his pleadings: '*Mais, Monsieur Ménager!*'

Once, in a provincial city, I strayed into a theatre, attracted by seeing his name in the bills in this very piece. But it was a disastrous spectacle; only a few score of people were in the house. They could not follow or understand the delicate *nuances* of the foreign sentiment. They wondered why he jumped into the orchestra; it seemed some broad joke or buffoonery. Poor Wigan! Yet he held on gallantly, and did his best as though he were at the Haymarket.

I knew him a little, having met him occasionally at dinner, when he was very agreeable, and told some amusing stories. But he and his clever wife were a little spoiled by the attentions of fashionable persons, and were fond of quoting 'dear Lady This or That.' In her later years, when she lived as a widow in Brompton Square, she became rather despotic, as I found out when I had to go to her to be rehearsed in a piece for some private theatricals. We had some rather unpleasant scenes, not exactly set down in the play. She was an admirable instructress, however; a single hint or direction was worth a whole essay.

Who that had seen them could forget that delightful pair, the Keeleys! How they filled the humorous atmosphere! What legitimate fun and genuine comedy they spread around them! When they were together, how they acted and reacted on each other! His face was a play in itself; in it there were whole acts, scenes, and characters. No one conveyed the notion of henpecked suffering so admirably, with a sort of piteous protest against his treatment, and a certain awe and timorousness that was exquisitely grotesque. There was nothing farcical in that face; it was rather grave and solemn, large and full, with a general florid or pinkish tone. The look of helplessness which he would give to the audience was irresistible. The pair would really carry on the scene by the interchange of looks and glances. What distinguished her was spirit and vivacity; she never flagged. In short, the very name Keeley brings a good-humoured smile to the face, and we think gratefully of the humorists to whom we owe such enjoyable moments.

There are many changes in the dramatic social life which may not strike us, but which have a deep significance. Here is one, for instance, that may seem a trifling one. Then used to be found in the list of *dramatis personæ* the clever husband and wife performing together. Thus there were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mathews, Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Mr. and Mrs. Rousby, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, and many more. Now there is hardly a single instance of this kind.

The reason, no doubt, is that the sort of gay piece of character where husband and wife would each find a suitable part has disappeared. It is now *ma femme et cinq poupées*, *i.e.*, *ma femme* being the actor-manager himself, his following the *poupées*. The husband and wife, playing always together, brought out each other's gifts and enriched the piece. Who can forget the racy Frank Mathews and his companion in the 'Bristol Diamonds' — that genuine, natural, laughter-moving performance? Alfred Wigan and his wife were not so well harmonized, and rarely played together.

The mention of Frank Mathews suggests another odd change, viz., the gradual decay and disappearance of the *low comedian.* This, again, is owing to the disappearance of low comedy itself. It is sad to see the two or three left making ineffectual struggles to keep their place. There is Edward Terry, an excellent performer, burdened with his own theatre, 'Terry's,' once a burlesque actor; and Lionel Brough, so admirable for his rich, broad humour. Toole still holds his place, but has to change his methods to suit the times.

It is melancholy to look back on the disastrous changes of 'stageland,' which seemed destined, after short-lived, brilliant beginnings, to set in with almost the certainty of fate. We look at one of these happy adventurers, as we may call them; everyone is talking of him; money is being showered into his lap. He is the man of the hour, or perhaps moment. An interval of ten years 'is supposed to elapse,' as they say in the melodramas ; we find a decay has set in ; there is a struggle to retain his place ; but the ground is slipping from under his feet. Sometimes arrives some scandal or disgrace. But the drop-scene too often descends on poverty, with appeal to friends, and sore privations even. How completely, too, the once regular 'benefit' has disappeared ! This, again, is owing to the rise of the 'actor-manager.' But it is felt that he has a benefit every night.

It is lamentable to find that actors of merit—actually from their merit—should be excluded from engagement, or appear in a sort of fitful fashion, presently to disappear once more. This seems to be owing to there being no position exactly suited to them. The name of many a good player will occur who is in this awkward 'Mahomet's coffin' state. They are to be classed with a tribe of unfortunates who at one time were humorously styled 'shutters,' their engagement almost invariably forecasting the abrupt closing of the house. They might be more appropriately styled the 'casuals,' or tramps of the stage. They have no 'settlement,' as it is called ; they appear in no fixed home ; they ever turn up in some new and fitful and precarious speculation, have their little day, and disappear in the certain collapse of the undertaking, after a short spell of a month or three weeks. They seem to find strange bedfellows in actors of very high degree, who are forced into the same unpleasant category from directly opposite causes.

Occasionally we see a once popular and now forgotten actor under such conditions. The genial audience at the Lyceum had little idea that the worthy Mead—who 'discharged' the ghost, and such characters, in sound judicious style—had once been a 'star actor,' enjoying the largest 'caps,' playing Hamlet, Macbeth, and a whole round of leading business. As I write there are a couple of players filling modest parts at Drury Lane who erst declaimed the same important characters. This, however, is not the fault of the public. *Their* public, the audience that knew them, has passed away; later generations have not known or perhaps have never heard of them.

The old barrister, old doctor, old writer, who choose to survive their contemporaries must share the fate of the old actor. Irving has generously used his high position to rescue several of these former favourites of the town from decay and neglect. There is something particularly generous and self-sacrificing in this, for crabbed old age is, in many points, not 'up to date,' and is an inconvenient burden to the manager.

Another buoyant, exuberant being of the old humorous school was George Honey. What a rich *unctuousness* in all his speeches and movements! He had an extraordinarily expressive face, quaintly odd, and a curious but most expressive twang in his voice. Lewis of the Daly Company is, perhaps, the only one now on the stage who has one of these invaluable comedy faces into which he can project his soul and feelings. While George was on the stage there was unbounded mirth; he had perfect hold of his hearers. He was certainly extravagant, often too extravagant; still, he made you *believe* in him. Excellent were his Our Mr. Jenkins and Eccles, which he had to play till he could play nothing else.

Our moderns, it seems to me, do not 'let themselves out' so thoroughly as he used to do. He had a special style of his own, and it was felt; and, indeed, it was beyond dispute that 'no one could do Honey's parts.' Such a performer as this is quite a different thing from the professed fun-making comedian of our time. His looks, tones, gestures, were relished far more than what he said. This, as we have seen, was the feeling in the case of Buckstone. He seemed to be less appreciated towards the close of his career; but then the old order was changing. There were fewer and fewer openings for him. But we always owed to him—a serious obligation—the enjoyment of a good, genuine, hearty laugh, and for some days afterwards had his odd figure before our eyes, and his odder tones in our ears.

Among the later generation of prominent successful actors must be counted the late Mr. Robson. With the most catholic taste in theatrical matters, and seeing good in almost everything, I must confess I never was deeply affected by this performer, though admiring his powers. And I fancy this represented the fair general opinion. For many years he had been a farce-actor of the broadest and most exuberant kind—the colours laid on very coarsely; as in 'The Wandering Minstrel,' when he gave the street clarionet-player, with his hoarse, gin-charged voice, with life-like accuracy. This was in the Zola vein, and was more curious than droll. In the 'Boots at the Swan' he had the traditions of the 'low comedian' of the old pattern, and was overflowing with jovial humour. Who could tolerate this piece now?

When he came to London he fancied, or others fancied, that he had tragic, pathetic gifts, which he exhibited in 'The Porter's Knot,' where he was a suffering ill-treated father, crooning and whining, as it were, in the most plaintive fashion. There were plenty who thought this display most pathetic, handkerchiefs were busy, etc., but it seemed to me rather artificial and forced. Then it was found that he had a gift of grotesque, fantastic humour, with alternations of frantic, spasmodic energy, exhibited in burlesques such as 'Medea,' with which it was said Ristori was much entertained. His mad dance, with flourishings of the knife, was much admired. He used to interpolate curious songs, which became the rage, such as 'Old Dog Tray,' in which, after a would-be pathetic account of the faithful animal, we had this humorous finale :

> 'In the mixture of the pies
> At last I recognise
> The flavour of my poor dog Tray.'

The pleasant 'Brothers Brough' usually provided him with an entertainment such as 'Masaniello ; or, The Fish'oman of Naples,' in which there was an allusion to a fine day, but somebody had '*made it a rainy un.*' This was the sort of jest with which audiences of that era were recreated. Robson's gifts were certainly not of a solid sort, though it must be said that he had genius of a certain kind. He had something of Frederic Lemaître's fitful, spasmodic efforts, with, it must be said, a share of his irregularities, which, growing on him, at last destroyed his attraction and made the public impatient. It was sad to see his gradual fall.

Sometimes in a provincial corps I am astonished to recognise an actor of extraordinary judiciousness, who plays his part in an admirably correct way, often, indeed, as well as it need be played. In the Compton Comedy Company there was, and may be still, an actor of this pattern, who used to perform the Sir Peters and other 'heavy fathers' in almost perfect style. Nothing could be more natural, ripe, full, or convincing than his interpretations. Everything he did was correct, and gave pleasure. His name was Lewis Ball, and he had learned his business with Phelps in the old Sadler's Wells times. No room, of course, could be found for him on a London stage, though Irving once engaged him for the 'Twelfth Night,' and this for the reason that no one cares for the pieces in which he could excel. He had to comfort himself with his country audiences, who knew and appreciated him. Still, there must be something disheartening for a worthy, sound, and capable old player to find the doors barred to him in this fashion. Once, listening to one of Mr. Daly's American performances, I was struck by the judicious, skilled way in which one of his inferiors discharged his part. It was not much, but it was exactly as it should be, and the full meaning he put into a common sentence was striking. I found that this was Mr. Loraine, an old 'star actor,' who had erst performed all the great characters. It was extraordinary, the difference between him and the rest.

It is curious to think that there are still with us some survivors of this old and remote school. There are two, at least, of the good old Adelphi times. The engaging, vivacious Mrs. Alfred Mellon—long known as Miss Woolgar—is still, happily, with us. With what interest used we to look at Alfred Mellon as he led the slow music in the orchestra when the Adelphi villain or adventurer was in the agonies of death! And one night at the Lyceum I found myself beside a very keen, shrewd-speaking old lady, who during the acts talked in the most cheerful, pleasant way, and during the play interposed expressions of admiration, chiefly for Ellen Terry, whose every speech and gesture she seemed to admire. At the end I was delighted to find that this was the veteran Mrs. Keeley. Helen Faucit, the original Pauline and Clara, and Macready's leading lady, still may be seen driving about in her carriage, 'a well-preserved' matron.

This old school will seem almost antediluvian to the boys and girls of our time, who, in their turn, when they come to forty or fifty, will be fondly looking back to *their* old school. 'Ah! you should have seen Beerbohm Tree,' they will be saying to the juveniles, 'in "The Tempter" or in "The Red Lamp"! No such acting now! And Arthur Roberts and Arthur Williams, Lottie Venne, George Alexander, too. Where will you find playing like *that?*' Still, I think it can be shown that the older school was superior, because the material and system on which it worked was superior. It was larger, more thoughtful, and more 'filling.' And this recalls a second group of players—old actors, perhaps, to our generation, and who wore the mantles of the veterans I have been describing. Not so many years ago I recall seeing in the stage box at the Lyceum a portly and stately dame—Mrs. Charles Kean—curiously contrasting with the graceful Ellen Tree of yore. Charles Kean had long since passed away. Many pleasant theatrical memories are associated with these two players. Not yet forgotten are their stately and sumptuous Shakespearian 'revivals.' The figures of a husband and wife, enjoying a solid domestic happiness at home, are always welcome to the public, as investing the stage with a tone of bourgeois respectability. This sort of personality is indeed 'half the battle' in all professions. Ellen Tree, in her earlier days, seemed an ideal of all that was elegant and romantic, not merely from her grace and melodious tones, but from the romantic characters with which she was associated. Our performers are now of a more earthly and less spiritual caste. We think of her with much pleasure, recalling how, during her Haymarket career, in 'The Housekeeper,' 'The Wife's Secret,' and other pieces, she was tender and interesting, a vision of delight and colour. Chalon's picture of the pair in this piece brings them vividly before us. Many will recall the agreeable theatrical jest in Dublin, when, on the very evening of their marriage, I think, they played in 'Much Ado about Nothing,' which, it may be conceived, had a special piquancy for the audience. In the Princess days she seemed rather stout and matronly for some of the characters she essayed, and there was something 'theatrical' or 'charnel-house' in her tones, as was the case with 'Mrs. Crummles.'

I confess Charles Kean never seemed to me a satisfactory performer. He was very stagy and artificial, and his short figure and nasal tones were often the subject of ridicule. Without actually knowing him, you felt that he thought much of himself and his position. They affected strict and stately methods in all their dealings, as though they were of the aristocracy of the profession. Then there was the halo of royal patronage—the theatricals at Windsor, which the manager regulated, to the disgust and jealousy of his brethren. Bartley, a good sound actor, with excellent traditions, figured in these royal theatricals. There always seemed to me a pedantry in Kean's playing of the Shakespearian characters, and a certain dreariness. His reading, it need not be said, had nothing of the modern romantic school.

Such were the 'old actors' of our schoolboy days, who rise more vividly before us than do the histrionic figures who are *nearer* to the present times. The truth is, they were rounder and more highly coloured. Their characters had a more *living* tone. Of late the crowd has become so dense, the successions so fitful, that no one figure stands out very distinctly. They come and depart like shadows. Perhaps this was owing to the keen relish and enjoyment of boyhood, when everything is novel, astonishing, and delightful. Yet I can say that this appreciation endured in its fullest force up to riper years, without the least sign of waning.

In the transition state I see a new group whom we can all recall, not nearly so prominent in gifts as the one we have been describing, but who were excellent in their level way. Such were Fechter, Robson, Sothern, Miss Bateman, Miss Neilson, David James, Lionel Brough, 'Sam' Emery, Herman Vezin and his wife (Mrs. Charles Young that was), William Farren, and a few more.

Of all the 'one character' actors that we have known, perhaps Sothern was the most successful. I have already spoken of him in his private capacity. His exuberant, buoyant Dundreary was the most extraordinary and original impersonation, certainly the most diverting. As is well known, it was almost entirely his own creation, and, as he played it, was gradually enriched by him with innumerable strokes and touchings. The reason of its success was his entire identification with the character. Sothern was as much Dundreary as Dundreary was Sothern. For the time he *was* altogether the fatuous lord. The exaggeration, the farcical extravagance, may be conceded ; it was out of drawing, out of nature ; but it was irresistible. During the years it was before the public, more genuine, hearty merriment was never heard within the walls of a theatre, and the laughter was always of an almost painful, aching kind. You had scarcely recovered from one hysterical burst when a more excruciating stroke still set you off again. The truth was, every speech, every movement, every incident, was irresistibly comic. He imparted a tone of sympathy, too, and made the character good-natured, and even interesting. As an analysis, too, of mental processes, it was really striking.

In May, 1878, this pleasant actor, after a long absence or eclipse, returned to the scene of his old triumphs, the Haymarket, where he was welcomed by an immense, enthusiastic house. Many years before Byron had written for himself a 'behind-the-scenes' piece, called 'The Prompter's Box,' in which the character of an unsuccessful player accepting his neglect gloomily suited him better than anything he had attempted, and was really diverting. Sothern fancied that it exactly suited *him*, and that he would make a great deal of the character. It fell, however, quite flat, and the tide of ill-luck was not to be turned back. The truth was, the fatal Dundreary business had rendered him all but helpless ; he could not 'act' —he could only use the old grotesque devices, and then he exaggerated extravagantly. This proves that it is the acting, the discrimination of character, that makes a piece novel or attractive. A piece differently or indifferently performed becomes another piece altogether, and is scarcely to be recognised. If the central figure be cleverly emphasized it fills the whole ; the rest makes little impression, and is merely a background.

Not long ago I heard from Mr. Bancroft an interesting account of the first performance of the play. He chanced to be in New York at the time. Sothern gave a sort of performance of his character ; but with every succeeding night he abated all the farcical elements, curtailing the whiskers, moderating the trousers, etc.—in short, bringing it more and more within the region of comedy. This showed a true instinct.

There are some very conspicuous instances where the actor has been so perfectly fitted to his part, has so thoroughly identified himself with it, and developed it with such wonderful thoroughness, that the living and assumed characters become homogeneous, as it were, and it is idle for any successor to think of producing the same effect. These happy, often accidental, conjunctions are few. Among them may be counted Phelps's Sir Pertinax, Sothern's Lord Dundreary, Rowe's Micawber, Irving's Mathias, James's retired butterman, Warner's Coupeau, and Jennie Lee's Joe. There may be one or two more ; it is enough to name these signal instances to feel that anyone attempting the same *rôle* would do so under the disadvantage of being measured not only with the character, but with the person who performed it ; and even in the improbable case of his showing equal merit, there would be the firmly-established partiality and prejudice to be encountered. There is, however, an unlucky disability attending this success in a particular character of eccentricity—that it clings to the player like a shirt of Nessus, and actually destroys and devours all future effort. Mr. Willard had long to suffer from this form of fame, and could not shake himself free from the incubus of 'the Spider,' whose glacial smile would intrude itself into every character, and compelled his authors to furnish him with replicas of that species. A more disastrous example, however, was furnished by the clever author who was identified with 'Joe.'

This, in its way, was really an extraordinarily perfect performance, full of pathos and colour, and stored with innumerable delicate touchings. The character was a play in itself, and thus proved how deeply-seated was the genuine instinct in the gifted author. Everything was complete; the spectator felt that nothing was lacking. The piece was raw and transpontine—a number of scenes and characters rudely put together. The physical gifts of the actress corresponded as though they had been furnished to order—the slight, frail, wasted street arab was there before us. The tones of the voice—a quaint gamut, now husky, now impudent—the fashion in which the broom was used, the air of stolid bewilderment, the sudden laugh, the genuine note of pathos: 'He wos werry good to me, he wos!'—all these touches were inimitable. The actress and her part were convertible—Joe was Jennie Lee, and Jennie Lee was Joe. It would be an interesting inquiry to trace out the cause of this complete identification limited to a single part. No doubt it arose from some similarity of character, or from some overwhelming *penchant* in the same direction. Perhaps success in some small, unpretending sketch of the same kind had revealed the capacity. The result, however, as I have said, was almost grotesquely disastrous. Other somewhat analogous characters were found and attempted, but made no impression. The efforts were renewed again and again, only to reveal a rather mediocre performer. Compelled to revert to 'Joe,' the actress was to find that the public now began to tire of the street-boy whom they had seen again and again. Finally, the once-followed star actress was glad to subside into the general utility ranks.

It was the same with Sothern, whom his Dundreary pursued, in spite of all his efforts, though he, indeed, fancied that he had a latent vein of tragedy, which he strove to develop with much perseverance and little success. David James, however, was luckily more successful in getting rid of his Perkin Middlewick. Phelps, too, was encumbered by his Sir Pertinax, which suggests the reflection that these 'one man one part' actors may have been somewhat limited in their talent, which they had exhausted in this one effort. The genuine, fully-furnished comedian has plenty of resources which he can draw upon.

A very remarkable actress in her way was Miss Bateman, or Mrs. Crowe, as she has since become. Some years before her success, the adroit manager, Bateman *père*, was showing two clever children, who performed in the regular drama and excited astonishment from their precocious talent. These were the earliest of the prodigy children—a phenomenon of which we have since had rather too much. In those days prodigies, like the infant Roscius, assumed grown-up characters; now we have infantine characters played by infants and children of tender years. Their prattle and artificial naïveté have become one of the nuisances of the modern stage. The outcast mother in the snowstorm, as Mr. Jerome has shown in his witty 'Stage-land,' cannot get through the business without the child, whom she occasionally clasps convulsively to her breast. How detestable is the child, who in horny, twanging tones looks up into the grown actor's face and asks, '*Are 'oo my papa?*' to the delight of the audience.

There is an actress whose memory still haunts playgoers—as though she were one of the actual 'old players'—though she scarcely falls within the category. I mean the fair and much-admired Adelaide Neilson. She was pleasing and interesting, but she certainly lacked the large grand style. There was something too highly artificial in her methods—she was inclined to recite instead of to act. At the same time, it must be admitted that the public, and good judges also, admired and liked her. Many will recall the long and pleasing series of performances she gave at the Haymarket, supported by that earnest, zealous, but rather ineffectual performer, Conway.

Not many actresses think how much of their own personal success depends upon the success of another—of, say, the 'june preemier,' as I have heard him called, who 'supports' them. A spirited romantic lover will kindle insensibly even a rather sluggish, slow-moving actress. She will, in spite of herself, catch his animation and fire, and be drawn into the spirit of the scene. Conway performed, and diligently performed, all the legitimate heroes—the Claudes, Romeos, etc. At that time he was a pleasing, well-favoured youth—interesting and much admired. But in the garden scene in 'Romeo and Juliet' he certainly was too obstreperous, and it was extraordinary to hear the lover in the garden disturbing the peaceful night with his too clamorous love-making, which must have roused, not the trusty nurse merely, but every sleeper in the palace. The fair Juliet had, as I said, innumerable admirers, not merely of her attractive, intelligent face, but of her style and acting. As is the case with so many in the profession, her finale was rather disastrous. She had made a little expedition to Paris, on pleasure bent, and was there seized with a fatal illness. She was treated roughly, if not cruelly, by those in authority; was summarily removed from her hotel to a hospital, I think, and there died. A melancholy catastrophe for the beautiful and much-admired Adelaide Neilson.

So firmly established is the reign of the romantic or realistic system, that it is difficult to conceive that only five-and-twenty years ago there were players who 'tore parts to tatters,' and mouthed and churned their words. These gentry were acceptable, too, and followed. Such was the late G. V. Brooke, who now seems to us somewhat of the 'Mr. Crummles' pattern. Another of these protagonists, who was strangely popular and drew great houses, was Barry Sullivan, to see whom in the crook'd-backed Richard's fight—Cibber's version, *bien entendu*—was an amazing thing. Such roarings, gaspings, growlings, and ferocious cuttings and drivings, could not be conceived or described. Nor shall I forget his other dying agonies in 'The Gamester,' protracted for an immense time. The poor gentleman lay on the floor, his family weeping round, whilst every instant he was projecting loud, sustained groans. He writhed and rolled, conveying that the poison was actually doing its work, and that he was suffering frightful internal agonies. This sort of thing is now extinct.

Vezin has ever been a sound, conscientious, and telling actor. He has played everything, and has always played well and to the satisfaction of his hearers. In the Shakesperian round he gives us the correct, traditional reading, based on the theory that the characters and their utterances are something different from what is likely to be met with in ordinary life, and must be interpreted accordingly—a view for which there is a good deal to be said. We follow him to the end of one of these dramas with interest and pleasure. I admire his good elocution and the fashion in which he brings out the meaning of his authors. A little more 'heart,' feeling, or romance would be an improvement. He is good, too, in comedy, though somewhat hard and self-conscious. But, on the whole, we have no more cultivated or well-trained performer. For him there is, of course, no place in London, unless he turn manager-actor, and have his own theatre. But he now 'tours it' in the country with his company.

What, by the way, is the secret or mystery of this wonderful touring system? It must be a costly and tremendous thing to take about a large band of persons, with their attendants, baggage, dresses, wigs, scenery, and the rest. These companies can be counted by the score, and are ever on the march. On a Sunday—the favourite day for movement, as the evening is free—the Northern lines are crowded with these caravans, crossing each other, and hurrying on their way. And yet, save in the case of some great London success, on a visit to a country theatre I have almost always found a disastrous emptiness and desolation. One would think that two or three such failures in the course of a tour would bring the whole to a disastrous *finale;* but the thing seems to go on merrily.

Another useful contributor to the public entertainment, and one who made a creditable effort to form public taste, was that now almost forgotten actress, Miss Litton. This painstaking person, who had a certain talent and versatility, was the founder of the now flourishing Court Theatre, where she gathered about her many capable performers for the presentation of long set pieces. The leading humorists were brought from the country, and it is remarkable that even so lately 'the country' was a useful training-ground for actors. Now the supply seems to have ceased altogether, for the natural reason that there are no country companies, and that the Metropolis now supplies the country. This is likely to be a disastrous change; for though the country acting is crude enough in style, there was then an abundance of genuine talent—witness the two admirable mimes, Hill and Righton, who were introduced at this theatre. After quitting the Court, Miss Litton ventured on an enterprise at the Aquarium Theatre, where she later attempted in the most persevering way to resuscitate the good old legitimate drama. This effort had but indifferent success, but she persevered for a long time and with great gallantry. We had thus an opportunity of seeing some welcome pieces, long 'laid on the shelf,' revived with much care and spirit, and modernized with a nice reserve. We look back with much enjoyment to many a pleasant afternoon when 'She Stoops to Conquer,' 'The Busybody,' 'The Country Girl,' 'The Beaux' Stratagem,' 'The Good-natured Man,' and other pieces were set out before us. There are but few who have ever seen the welcome 'Beaux' Stratagem'—a piece of genuine comedy, interesting and diverting in the highest degree. Farren was the gay and buoyant Archer, played in the true comedy style; Brough, Scrub; Miss Litton and Miss Creswell the two elegant ladies of the comedy.

We have lately lost an admirable actor, who certainly possessed the power, not merely of realizing a character, but of finding the proper expression for it—two gifts not often met with together. Even where an actor knows what his character is, it is often strange to find him expressing it by methods that are almost opposed to it.

David James—*né* Belasco—was of the line of the old actors; he became the character he acted, though it must be said he was signally successful in only three or four parts. The truth was, he ripened slowly, and the fitting opportunities only came to him late, and he had been long grounded, as it were, in the mummeries of burlesque. From these it was difficult for him to shake himself free. Two of his characters were certainly admirable, worthy of even the most palmy period of the stage—the inimitable butterman and Eccles. In the former he displayed the rare gift of appearing to be, as it were, saturated with his character. It welled forth from his very pores. He 'made up' the figure, too, not by mechanical means, but by his very habit of body. Thus the long, ill-fitting baggy waistcoat was not a mere bit of pantomime dress—it was the expression of his mind within. He was always arranging it, pulling it down, reminding us that he felt awkward in this bit of finery. So with his face, always mantling with a vulgar exuberance. Every movement, every gesture, was in keeping. He was the whole play, the others merely puppets. It was indeed a most finished, natural performance, and it is wonderful to think that it was given without interruption for some four years.

Another amazing run at the Vaudeville—*consulibus James et Thorne*—was that of the 'School for Scandal,' which kept the boards until the performers became utterly sick of it. I recall one of the company telling me that they would play all sorts of wanton tricks, withdrawing certain passages for a night or two, forgetting or inventing speeches; it did not matter—the public persisted in coming. In the old Strand days there really seemed to have been two other actors named James and Thorne, so utterly different were their methods. What pleasant, diverting hours are associated with that rather squalid, contracted, and uncomfortable theatre! What roars of laughter set in as it came to ten o'clock, when the burlesque began! What a humorous party, one of whom was a Clarke—the lugubrious Clarke, who was unsurpassed in 'Jeames' parts, which he invested with a stately melancholy! I still recall his genuine disgust when he heard that a friend of his had set up an eating-house in the Borough. 'A heatin' 'ouse in the Boro'?' he repeated over and over again, in sorrow rather than in anger, Memories of 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold' are still cherished, James portraying Francis in his melancholy plain way, and Fenton, who had also painted the scenes, enacting Henry. It is hard to forget James's rueful face as he was severely punished in a friendly contest 'with the gloves' by his royal friend. There was pain, surprise, disgust exhibited. Thorne, in those days, was always cast for some ridiculous female character—burlesque queens and comically forlorn spinsters. He was always dropping his 'chignon' or getting entangled in the wires of his crinoline; yet in the early part of the night he was the comedian playing Meddle in 'London Assurance.' For a long time this merry pair held sway at the Vaudeville—that is, so long as this wonderful 'spurt' of success continued. But after some failures a long smouldering disagreement broke out, and they dissolved partnership.

I could call up numbers of these departed figures, such as Ryder—worthy 'Jack Ryder'—the beautiful 'Rousby' and her hapless story, and many more. In connection with 'Jack' rises before me that most diverting scene, when he had to play in 'Lear' with Rossi, the Italian using his native tongue, the rest of the company English. 'Jack' was the faithful Kent. Very speedily both actors lost count of 'cues' and answers, and replied in a sort of haphazard style. 'Twas a rich scene indeed! Enough, however, of these old shadows.

END OF VOL. I.

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